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– Which Micro?, Aug 83

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– What Micro?, Dec 83

ADVENTURE REVIEWS

"This has to be the bargain of the year. If adventures are your game then this (Colossal Adventure) is your adventure."
– HCW, 5 Sept 83

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– Educational Computing, Nov 83

Colossal Adventure is included in Practical Computing's Top 10 games choice: "Poetic, moving and tough as hell."
– PC, Dec 83

"To sum up, Adventure Quest is a wonderful program, fast, exciting and challenging. If you like adventures then this one is for you"
– NILUG # 1.3

"Colossal Adventure . . For once here's a program that lives up to its name . . a masterful feat. Thoroughly recommended"
– Computer Choice, Dec 83

"wholly admirable"
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Subscriptions
UK £10.00 for 12 issues, overseas surface (excluding US and Canada) £16 for 12 issues, US and Canada air-lifted US$33.95 for 12 issues.

Micro Adventurer is published monthly by Sunshine Books, Scot Press Ltd. Typesetting by In-Step Ltd, 77 Farringdon Road, London EC1. Printed by Eden Fisher (Southend) Ltd, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Distributed by SM Distribution, London SW9 (telephone 01-274 8611, telex: 261643). ISSN 0265-4156. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper.
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SUNSHINE

EDITORIAL

THERE'S AN AMERICAN pop song that goes "When I look back at all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all". Now we wouldn't argue that adventures could be useful in school in terms of supplying you with knowledge which might (or might not as the case may be) prove useful later. For example, you're not going to learn the names of all the world's capitals by playing adventures (although you might acquire an intimate knowledge of one seedy part of London), nor will you learn your multiplication tables (although Pimania has a few geometrical pointers). But in terms of encouraging memory, analysis and decision-making there's a lot to be said for adventures. And if Edward de Bono is right and lateral thinking overtakes logic, adventures would make an ideal educational tool.

Tongue-in-cheek, you could even advance an argument in favour of bad adventures — the ones with limited vocabularies would certainly reassure a child at kindergarten ("Look, mummy, I know more words than the computer"). But to take our tongues out of our collective cheeks it does seem odd that teachers are ignoring the educational opportunities provided by adventures.

Exactly why should adventures be excluded from that pat category educational software? (Hands up anybody who answered "Because they're enjoyable".) Admittedly some excellent software has been developed to aid rote-learning for younger children — but why stop there? Good adventures encourage players to discover and explore (at no literal risk to life or limb but facing a wide range of imaginary threats) — clues have to be pondered and puzzles solved — and strategies have to be developed and then adapted. The world of adventures may appear frivolous (who needs Norse Gods when we've got nuclear bombs, why go to Middle Earth when there's Greenham Common to visit instead?), but the thought processes adventures encourage can be useful.

If a group of children were to play an adventure together the results might be even more rewarding. There would obviously be no lack of things to discuss (perhaps discuss is an understatement) — both in deciding what to do next and then in wondering what went wrong. The advantage is that nothing can go irredeemably wrong — you always live to learn your tables on another day. Maybe you did lose your head in the Gorgon's Cavern but at least you're guaranteed a next time when you should do better.

LETTERS

Send your hints, successes, complaints and compliments to Letters Page, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Six of one . . .

AFTER READING the article on *The Prisoner* in the December issue of Micro Adventurer, would it be possible to provide me with the address of the fan club Six of One please?

R. Eperjesi,
The Holmes,
Fordhouses,
Wolverhampton,
West Midlands.

AFTER reading your article on *The Prisoner* I would like to know if the appreciation society still exists and, if so, how could I contact it.

I would like to congratulate you on the magazine to which I now subscribe, having paid £10.00 for 13 issues. Keep up the good work.

Andrew Lake,
Aleister St,
Stoke,
Plymouth.

SIX OF One, the appreciation society for *The Prisoner*, does still exist. The address is PO Box 61, Cheltenham, Glos.

Why a disk drive?

WHILE applauding the production of a magazine devoted to computer adventuring, I am disappointed to see that you are following in the path of most other computer magazines by publishing inaccurate, incomplete information and advice.

One item in particular concerns the letter titled Disk drive expense (December). The reply, while true in a limited fashion, is inaccurate and misleadingly limited.

Infocom programs including Zork cannot be released on cassette because random file access is integral to the manner in which they operate. It is not a matter of an extra 15 to 20 minute wait for loading or a preference for disk packaging that mitigates against the cassette but the nature of the material.

Infocom software ranges from 80K to more than 160K of program and data thus making it impossible to load into memory, in its entirety, from cassette. The sequential type of solution adopted for Carnell's Black Crystal cassette will not work either since these large multiple programs are adapted to the sequential nature of tape storage.

Infocom games are successful because they are not linear and allow the movement within the game to make full use of the disk medium. It is possible to move into an area not currently in memory, wait a few second while the necessary information is overlayed into memory and continue then return to the previous area, again with only a few seconds wait as the previous data is restored to the computer's memory.

This technique is eminently acceptable to gamers as it allows the use of large programs and ample data but relies on the ability of disks to support random access files.

While a cruder but similar method of program overlays would be possible to implement on cassette, I doubt that even PK Gollin would be prepared for multiple long time lags when moving to and fro in such a game.

The only hope for those who cannot yet afford disk drives is some form of microdrive or the development of large ROM cartridges using some form of internal bank switching to cater for large programs.

Laurence Miller,
Great Barr,
Birmingham.

Critique snowballs

OH DEAR. What a disappointment was your (December) MW's review on the new adventure from Level 9, Snowball. In a review I like to be told some idea of the happenings in an adventure. I find it very dreary to hear that loading takes seven minutes, that Snowball's command analyser allows a great flexibility in command format, or that adventure points are awarded for doing clever things. The reviewer obviously knew little of this adventure and has padded his or her way out of trouble with a load of useless facts. Fully researched my foot. Where, in the Labyrinths of La Coshe?

Now that you have got me going and I'm in this gripey mood, I would like to say something about Adventure Contract, on Tony Bridge's page. While I think that this is an admirable idea I put out a plea to those in need of help: I have written to quite a number of adventurers giving advice — but I have never ever received a reply. I am afraid that this is starting to put me off writing to people. My best contacts to date have been on the telephone. On this point, surely it is better with letters to the editor to just give telephone numbers not an address. You can obtain a telephone number from an address via directory inquiries but not an address via a telephone number.

David Swain,
Beechcroft Rd,
Oxford.

SORRY YOU are having no luck with the Contact Column. For the moment we think it better not to publish phone numbers. If you first contact someone via the post they might volunteer their phone number. Perhaps other adventure contacts would like to write to the editor with comments on how they have found the column.

An addict's advice

ALTHOUGH MY main interest in micros lies in the field of business programming, I am a self-confessed adventure addict of many years standing.

My home machine is a Commodore 8032 with 8050 disk drive, and I suppose that this gives me rather an advantage over many readers in having access to larger disk-based games. But I really must express astonishment that in a magazine dedicated to adventure games there is no mention of programs that I consider to be the peak of sophistication.

I began in the usual way with games such as Pirate's Cove (1½ days to solve) and similar programs, but found them no real challenge. Catacombs and Cornucopia, marketed by Supersoft, were my introduction to the realms of true adventure gaming. Weird Wood could possibly have had me stumped had I not become friendly with the author.

Currently under development by the same author and available early this year is a new program possibly to be called Weird Wood 2 (although I prefer the title Adventurer's End). In this he has used every trick in the book to make it undoubtedly the ultimate game to date.

Jim MacBrayne,
Paidmyre Crescent,
Newton Mearns,
Glasgow.

'One goblet of golden elixir, one silver flask of invisibility potion, and a rare wizard's brew for infinite wisdom — coming up lads!"

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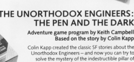
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THE UNORTHODOX ENGINEERS: THE PEN AND THE DARK

Adventure game program by Keith Campbell
Based on the story by Colin Kapp

Colin Kapp created the classic SF stories about the Unorthodox Engineers – and now you can try to solve the mystery of the indestructible pillar of darkness and the riddle of contra-energy in this mind-bending text adventure game.

Reading Colin's story in this pack should help you. But once you and your micro are locked into the problem, not even Colin could get you out.

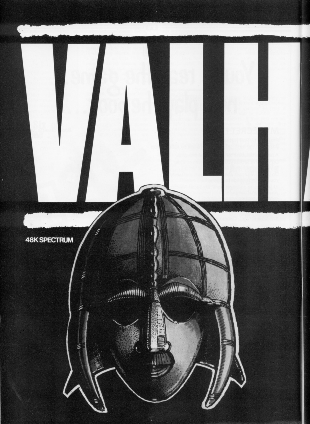
By special arrangement with an unspecified alien culture, Mosaic will let you have the story along with the program – so at least you're in with a chance. Please read the story carefully . . . because we'd like to release our Spring SF bookware blockbuster (Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat on micro for the first time!) before you carelessly unleash contra-energy across the universe. Thank you.

Available for the: **Spectrum 48K** ISBN 946855 15 3 **BBC Micro B** ISBN 946855 20 X

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Published by Mosaic Publishing Ltd
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NEWS DESK

If you think you've something newsworthy, call 01-437 4343 and let us know

On the road to learning

JERICHO Road, an educational adventure for the Spectrum 48K from Shards is a first in many ways.

It was written by a church minister, Peter Goodland, from Seven Kings in East London. And it aims to teach history through a factual representation of a biblical story.

In the adventure, which is set on two levels, the player must find a way out of Israel along the road to Jericho.

In the difficult version the player must also solve a tricky word puzzle before the game is completed.

An inscribed pot with a strange but meaningless word square is found. The player visits people and places to find an escape from Israel. He or she is given clues and gradually works out the solution.

Of course if you are familiar with the biblical story it will be a help in solving the adventure, if not Shards have four pages of crib sheets telling you how the story evolved, the background of its characters and places and clues to the game.

Shards emphasised that the program did not preach but that it was merely educational, based on a biblical story.

The company plans to launch another educational program this month called Mystery of the Java Star.

It concerns the raising of an eighteenth century bark from the depths of the South Atlantic.

The program is aimed at the 11 to 16 year-old age group.

It requires a knowledge of geography, the reading of compasses and grid map references, and the ability to solve jigsaw puzzles.

The four-part program is for the Dragon 32. It begins in England where the player must find a map of the South Atlantic directing him or her to the place where the Java Star sank.

The strategy game Empire, from Shards, which was based on a board game in which the player attempts to conquer the world, has been released for the BBC.

It was previously available only for the Dragon. The BBC version costs £6.95.

Spectrum favourites converted

ARTIC have released four adventure games for the Commodore 64.

They are Planet of Death, Inca Curse, Ship of Doom and Espionage Island.

They are the first Artic games released for the Commodore. Previously they were available only for the Spectrum.

3 BBC B games

CASTLE Frankenstein, The Quest for the Holy Grail and The Kingdom of Klein are three adventures recently launched by Epic Software for the BBC B.

They are traditional text adventures written in machine code.

The games include full sentence decoding, colour, fast responses, scoring and game save on tapes.

Each game includes puzzles and about 230 locations.

Teenager completes program in record time

FRAZER Hubbard, the 15 year old who cracked Hewson's Quest Adventure, says that he prefers to play adventures rather than arcade games because they are more interesting.

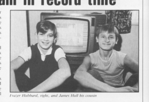
Frazer, who surprised Hewson's by taking only six weeks to solve the adventure instead of six months, comes from Goudhurst in Kent where he is studying for his O levels.

A spokesman for Hewson's said Quest Adventure would usually take a long time to solve because it required lateral thinking.

"Frazer had been in a car accident and had the time to persevere with the game. So he solved it sooner than we would have expected," the spokesman said.

"He's a real computer fanatic. He practically did nothing else while he was ill.

"He hopes to be a programmer when he finishes school," the spokesman said.



Frazer Hubbard, right, and James Hull his cousin

£3,000 contest launched

MELBOURNE HOUSE, the producers of The Hobbit, have launched a competition with £3000 in prizes to accompany the release of a game designer, Hurg.

It was designed to enable Spectrum owners to develop machine language arcade games and graphics at a professional standard.

A series of questions aids the selection of features needed to design a specific game.

If the shape required is a man, monster, spaceship or something more unusual, the shape designer can be instructed to produce it.

Any shape can be fully animated to give on-screen arcade quality.

Variations to the game may be achieved by changing individual features. You can speed the game up, change the scenery or make the monsters more vicious. Dramatic sound effects and score boards can be added.

The games can be saved on to a cassette and played later using the game designer as the control program next time.

Melbourne House will award a prize for the best-designed game, which used Hurg, that it receives.

Details of the competition are enclosed with each Hurg package, which costs £14.95. The game designer is available from all leading retailers or by mail order.

Quill exceeds expectations

THE SUCCESS story of the ZX micro fair held at the Alexandra Palace was The Quill.

Elated at the success of the Gilsoft product Howard Gilbert said The Quill was selling better than he could have hoped.

The Quill is an interpreter program that can be used to compile your own adventures for the Spectrum 48K.

After writing their own programs, Quill owners are entitled to market their adventure if they think someone will buy it.

All Gilsoft ask is that they be acknowledged at the beginning of a progam based on The Quill.

Howard believes that the more adventures on the market, the better the standard of games.

"The Quill could improve the adventure market enormously rather than restrict it," Howard said.

One game already written with The Quill is Denis through the Drinking Glass.

Written by Roger Taylor, also at the ZX Fair, the game is in verse. The first location is described as: "A cosy den at Number 10, safe from Maggie's eye, where you can plan your get away and drink the cellar dry."

In the game the hero is Denis Thatcher. His objective is to get to a place called the Grave Digger's Arms at all costs, avoiding the watchful eye of the prime minister.

On his journey, which covers up to 95 locations, Denis meets a variety of people, including Ken Livingstone, Norman Tebbit, Tony Benn and Ian Paisley.

He visits Sir Keith Joseph and his monetarist dream world and, carrying a lawn mower and parachute, drops in on the Pope.

It may be added, perhaps unnecessarily, that the game is an unabashed send up of current political figures.

The author of the game, is a politics graduate and amateur dramatist.

Roger believes that there is a market for his game among people with a sense of humour who are tired of zapping several characters before completing their quest.

Following the interest expressed in Denis through the Drinking Glass, with Roger appearing on television, Gilsoft have released a series of adventures all written using The Quill.

Howard Gilbert from Gilsoft at the micro fair

Some available include The Adventures of Barsac the Dwarf, Diamond Trail, Magic Castle and Fairground.

Roger's second game, written also with the use of The Quill, is a puzzle of logic and was named after the mathematician Archimedes.

The player is presented with a rhyming riddle in each location of Archimedes' Screw.

The riddles must be solved so that various objects can be returned to their correct places.

Roger said players should find the games amusing and difficult.

"They rely heavily on general knowledge and lateral thinking," he said.

"The structure of the program when mapped looks like an Archimedean screw," Roger said, hence the name.

Both games are available for the Spectrum 48K.

The second ZX Fair success story reflected the growing popularity of the Currah Speech Synthesier.

Priced at £29.95 the Level 9 stand had sold out of their stock of 100 by noon on Sunday.

An aid for CBM 64 owners

INTERPOD, an inexpensive interface from Oxford Computer Systems, is designed to relieve the dependence of the user on the Commodore 64's single disk drive.

According to Oxford Computer Systems any software that can be run on a 64 may be used with Interpod.

The Interpod is said to be an aid for businesses that are presently restricted by the capabilities, operating speed and facilities covered by the Commodore range of 64 peripherals.

Interpod is a small black box that will provide users with both RS232 and IEEE interfaces.

Unlike other interfaces Interpod does not use the cartridge slot of the 64.

Cricklewood wakes up

THE Cricklewood Incident is a new Tansoft adventure due out now.

Set in the London suburb of Cricklewood, the player must tackle tardy London buses, nasty youths and Australian tourists who will attack unless placated with a can of Fosters.

The Cricklewood Incident will be available for the Oric also.

Your problem-solving abilities will be tested in House of Death, Tansoft's follow-up to Zodiac.

The £9.95 Oric game is set in an old house where horror films were once made.

The player searches for a treasure among props, vampires and a host of other monsters.

The vampires could be a hindrance in the treasure hunt, in which case the player might kill them providing the right implements are found, or they may be a help. It's up to you to offer them the right incentive.

Infocom releases detective mystery

INFOCOM have released a new game called Witness, based on a detective mystery.

The Witness package contains a detective's dossier of clues, the National Detective Gazette, a suicide note, telegram, a matchbox and that day's news events.

The game is set in February 1938 and concerns death of a society matron. A con-man is trying to frame the dead woman's husband.

You, as the witness, work from a clue-ridden police file and against a 12-hour time limit to solve the suspicious society murder.

Clues hint that it is a sordid family affair that may lead everyone from the heiress to the butler in prison.

It's up to the player to sort through the clues, motives and alibis in order to solve the mystery.

The Witness is available for £33.95 for the Apple and IBM + PC.

Latest PSS software

THE US-based software company PSS have released a new adventure called Krystals of Zong for the Commodore 64.

A spokesman for PSS said the game should prove as popular as the PSS educational games, such as Easy Tutor.

Krystals of Zong retails for £7.95.□

Creating a land of your own

Planning a plot first will save you time and heartache when writing the program, says ***Mike Grace*** *in this extract from "Commodore 64 adventures"*

MOST OF the books and articles on programming will tell you that writing any type of software should follow certain well-defined paths and adventure games should be no exception.

I have found that despite the obvious desire to sit down at the keyboard and start programming right away this is one time when the advice — think first — is vital.

I know this is irksome — in fact the attraction of the hardware is a fatal flaw in my own programming — but unless you do force yourself to work out the bulk of your story on paper first all you'll achieve (besides creating problems for later) is an extra few weeks rewriting your program again and again.

The story (or perhaps a better word would be plot) is critical to both the success of the game and the structure of the program. In many ways the process of creating a suitable adventure is similar to the methods that film-makers use when constructing a film (a concept I will return to later), and I found this was the most exciting stage in my program.

The basic theme

You need to both create the basic theme (write the story in other words) and then visualise it as though viewing it through the eyes of your audience.

Part of the thrill of most adventure games I've played has been the feel of participation of actually taking part in the scenario. If it is to be successful this must be due to a combination of features which I will summarise to set your mind to thinking about them now — whilst starting to create the beginnings of your story.

The success and satisfaction of your game will depend on: your ability to use words to create images of your story; the depth and plausibility of your plot; the imagination of the person playing the game.

With regard to the last point you don't have any control over the skill and imagination of potential players, but as it appears that adventure players are often fans of science fiction and fantasy then it seems a reasonable assumption that they will have a well-developed imagination — so I think we can take point three for granted. The other two features now take on a more important role.

Adventure games still tend in many cases to follow the style of the original versions created for mainframe computers or the well-known Scott Adams games — they have a bias towards the dungeons and dragons, science fiction, fantasy or horror theme.

A quick scan of any magazine will throw up a variety of titles such as Mysterious Castle, Dracula's Lair, Island of Doom, Tale of the Dragon, and many more. Of course you don't have to follow this trend and there are several games with a totally different storyline, (escaping from an asylum, looking for the right husband/wife, attempting to slip out for a night on the town) which add a welcome touch of originality for the hardened player.

Main characters

I read once there are no original plots for stores — only different variations. Of course it's true, but Star Wars is a perfect demonstration of the ability to take a simple plot and transform it into a smash hit.

In all our stories we need some type of quest or goal to be achieved (find treasure, rescue a princess, escape from a dangerous situation, discover the meaning of a puzzle). We need a recognisable hero or heroine (in the adventure game the player takes on that role) and usually a villain or some other conflict for our main characters.

When I wrote my own story I used the following steps:

1. Select the environment (eg fantasy, horror, sf).
2. Choose a quest or goal (eg find treasure, escape from a wizard).
3. Decide on the role of the hero/heroine.
4. Select the main characters (eg wizard, vampire, countess).
5. Write a synopsis of the story.
6. Draw a simplified map with a few basic locations.
7. Storyboard the plot.

Nostalgia of youth

It may sound as though there is a lot of hard work before even touching the keyboard, but many of the steps in writing your story will follow so naturally that it becomes a fascinating and challenging goal in itself. And short-circuiting this step will either produce extra work later or result in an unsatisfactory product in the end.

The traditional type of adventure game, which borrows heavily on the fantasy world of Tolkien and related writers, abounds with elves, dragons, sorcerors, castles dripping with magic and mystery and similar things.

Perhaps it really is the nostalgia of the fairy-tales of our youth that partly explains this popularity — perhaps a deeper reason, but for the budding adventurer the range of possibilities opened by selecting this environment adds a zest and originality less-likely in the more mundane world. After all — anything is possible in your story.

Immediate ideas

Sword and sorcery is a branch of this type of environment which substitutes the more magical aspects for violence. In this genre (typified by the writings of Robert E Howard and his splendid hero Conan) the world is a dark and savage place where spells and sorcery are real and your prowess with the sword is your real asset.

There are plenty of other situations you can use as I have mentioned, the detective solving the crime, the innocent caught up in the world of espionage, the castaway on a desert island. You only need to look at the programmes on the television, the books in the fiction section at your library or the films being shown at your local cinema to find immediate ideas for your story. And, of course, there is science fiction.

I've left science fiction until now because this is the environment I chose for my adventure — Nightmare Planet. Purist SF fans would probably argue that Nightmare Planet is more space opera than true SF, but for the sake of simplicity I regard all stories with a background of time and space as science fiction.

Again possibilities are pretty extensive, time travel to rescue the good doctor who has been flung into the far future by his premature temperings with a time machine, battles against the aliens planning to invade the earth, searching a post-nuclear planet for life after the holocaust. It was into this type of general environment that I decided to place my story.

One goal

The whole idea of adventure is to solve a puzzle, find an answer, achieve a goal — so the main consideration from the start must be to decide what your goal will be.

When I first began to work out Nightmare Planet I had only one goal — to rescue the Princess Aurora. As the story expanded during the programming stage I added a second goal — to find the energy crystal and bring it back to the spaceship.

This added to the difficulty of the game and extended the scope of the adventure quite considerably but was not really an essential part of the original story. Thus, despite the importance of choosing your goal, it is possible to amend it later or as I did — add to it.

Don't be tempted to start to work out fine detail at this stage. For example, suppose you have decided to make your goal FIND THE TREASURE inside the Castle of Doom. As your imagination

Location: Inside your Spaceship.

You awaken with a throbbing head amidst the wreckage of the contents of your cabin. As you stagger to your feet suddenly the memory of your spaceship losing control comes back to you.

Your mission — to deliver the beautiful Princess Aurora to the Planet Thoth, where she is to be married to the ruler Zorn-Ramok, a cruel man who sees the union in terms of its polictical value.

Your problem — you have fallen in love with the Princess and, unknown to her, guided your ship into the lonely outposts of the Galaxy in an attempt to persuade her to forget her promise to marry Zorn-Ramok and escape with you.

But fate has played a hand in your plans, for your ship was damaged by a sudden ion storm and it was all you could do to steer for an uncharted planet in the outer limits of the known Galaxy and attempt a landing

Now you recover amidst the damage of your battered spaceship. Around you lie the contents of your locker, your spacesuit, galaxy charts, your blaster, and the signs of an obvious struggle. But Aurora has gone.

Your airlock is registering that it has been opened from the outside then resealed. Your only blessing is that Proteus, your personal robot, is undamaged and can aid you in your search for Aurora.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

LOCATION: By the shores of a lake.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Dive

CAN'T DO THAT . . . . . YET!

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW

Swim

O.K

You bob silently on the top of the water, looking down at the glinting metal object on the bed of the lake. It is another blaster from the spaceship.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Dive

O.K

A giant monster eel attacks you, appearing as if from nowhere

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Fire blaster.

IMPOSSIBLE — it is too damp

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Kill monster

I DON'T KNOW WHAT 'MONSTER' IS

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Kill eel

begins to work out the story you also start thinking of whether to add a score to the game, adding 10 points for every item of treasure.

While your mind is thinking of this you could become diverted into adding the concept of subtracting points for various problems encountered which your player hasn't solved in a particular time limit.

From this you may decide that you will need a display of the score on the screen all the time — so you sit down in front of your micro and begin to work out the graphics of your scoreboard . . .

The essence of good storywriting at this stage is simplicity. The frills will come later once you begin to program.

Fantasy hero

Next you have to decide on the role of the hero. This — quite simply — places the player into the scenario. As involvement in the adventure is the key to good playing you need to make your potential player feel as if he is the hero.

Your player acts as himself thrown into the fantasy world, or your player takes on the role of the fantasy hero.

I don't think it matters too much which you decide — as long as you make it clear right from the start of the game. In my own case I wanted the hero to be the pilot of a battered but reliable spaceship (shades of Han Solo) who made his living as a freight-operator.

Of course the other characters in the plot will depend on the story you are writing, so this stage should really be considered at the same time as creating the actual story itself. But as most of these stages are slightly artificial . . . (what really happens is that as you think of your story you will automatically be thinking of the hero, the location, the villain) it is easier to have some kind of structure which ensures that you don't leave anything out.

The main characters must be accomplices, people to rescue, villains, and assorted types to add local colour or act as red herrings or clue-givers. Nightmare Planet is fairly lacking in characters because of its location — an alien planet which contains various perils rather than villains — so the only other real character is the Princess Aurora.

While I have not done so for the purpose of this book, it would be a simple matter to include a prompt at the beginning of the game asking if the player is male or female. Upon receiving the appropriate response the game would then set various variables so that the princess could become a prince and the player become a female space pilot.

Ideas can occur at the strangest of times, often in the bath, late at night, or as in may case on the train.

As I rattled down from Manchester to London one dull morning the whole plot came to me quite unexpectedly and quickly, and I scribbled it down there and then.

This formed the synopsis — which remained the same in basic content throughout the creation and programming of the whole game.

Plot thickens

My synopsis was as follows: you are the pilot of a spaceship on a mission to deliver the beautiful Princess Aurora to the planet Zen where she is to be married to the tyrant ruler. You have fallen in love with Aurora but dare not tell her.

A sudden power failure or meteor storm causes you to crash on a strange, uncharted planet. You successfully land your ship but black out during the crash.

When you awaken you discover the ship has been entered from outside the princess has been captured. You have to set out and rescue her.

The atmosphere on the planet is poisonous so you are forced to wear your spacesuit at first, but along the way you chance upon an alien plant with strange fruit which (when eaten) allows you to breath the air safely.

You cross a vast desert to a ruined city in your travels, but all you find there is a giant snake which attacks you.

You eventually come to a huge forest and continue your search. You become lost, and after some time climb a tree to see where you are.

Happy ending

To the south you see smoke curling in the air — life of some sort. On the way to the area you are attacked by a dinosaur, obviously the planet has not developed very far along the evolutionary trail yet, and eventually you find a village of mud huts belonging to the natives who inhabit this part of the land.

You have found Aurora who is considered by the natives to be a goddess. They threaten you when you try to take her away — and it is only when you kiss her and show them you are her intended mate that they will let you both escape.

On the way back to your ship you discover that Aurora really loved you all along (there was obviously magic in your kiss!!) and you fly away together to a blissful future at the edge of the galaxy.

It may not be great literature but the essence of my plot is all there. As I began developing the story I added refinements and improvements along the way but surprisingly little. ▷

◁You need some idea of the geographical relationship of the various locations in your adventure to help you avoid making mistakes in your planning later on. I found this was simpler if I just drew a very basic map which placed the various locations into 'real space' rather than attempting to fit them into a grid.

The discipline of drawing this map is a great help in developing the story, for as I began to think of the objects and perils I would start to place in specific locations so I found the skeleton of my original plot developing layers of clothing.

Having drawn the initial map and given some thought to the plot the next stage is to start to storyboard your adventure.

Essentially I'm a visual person. I love films, I prefer illustrated stories to prose (that means comics) and when it comes to writing I tend to see the finished product in my mind's eye before I put finger to keyboard. So it was natural for me to begin to write my adventure by using a technique of story-boarding similar to the process a director will often use when planning out a film in the early stages.

Storyboarding

A storyboard is just a collection of visual images portraying the story on a collection of boards — a strip cartoon of the film in other words. Obviously writing a computer program relying heavily on text is not the same as shooting an epic, but if I was to use a similar principle then what I wanted was to see first what the player would see on his computer screen.

I needed to imagine the layout of text on the screen and to picture some of the possible responses of my potential player so I could begin to think about the framework of my plot.

At first this technique may seem a bit of a time-waster — after all who wants to sit around writing imaginary responses to "WHAT SHALL I DO NOW?" on bits of paper when there's a keyboard to play with but in my own case I found this part of my construction extremely valuable.

Developing ideas

I suspect it was because I was able to begin to 'thought-launder'. This means that I was forced (by the act of writing down various ideas and replies) to think much more deeply about both my plot and also my locations. I began to get ideas which would serve me in good stead later.

A simple example is the personal robot Proteus who has survived the crash and as it says on the screen published with this article, ". . . can aid you in your search for Aurora."

I first hatched the idea of having a little robot who would be around to come in with a comic comment or quip on this screen — my first storyboard.

This idea would change and develop, to become Victor the robot who drops down from the top of the screen at various moments throughout the game. I wonder if I'd have thought of Victor if I hadn't spent the time thinking and writing up this first screen back at the beginning?

The two other screens are just further locations, again to show how I was planning out my plot.

The last screen is one of the many I made up as I went through my story — trying to imagine I was keying in the appropriate responses to the messages from the computer. When I came to the actual programming of this sequence I was already fairly certain of what I wanted — and although I changed a few ideas around slightly the essence remains in the final version of Nightmare Planet.

Writing the plot may be the hardest part of writing your own Adventure and perhaps the most frustrating for keen programmers. But I have a feeling that adventurers are imaginative and creative people who will find that once the idea of a plot-line has crept into their mind it'll be hard to shake it. Once this happens then the only way to escape is to write — to transfer the toughts to paper and then to computer.

I hope my introduction to the actual act of transferring that idea, that concept that will make your adventure unique and workable and will save you time and heartache later.

I have spent some time on it because all the books and articles I had read on programming adventures concentrate on the technical expertise of programming and tend to skip the hard part — the creation. □

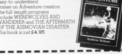
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Graphics span the Spectrum

***Tony James** looks at a sub-routine that enables the printing of an unlimited number of User Defined Graphics*

ON THE SPECTRUM the User Defined Graphics are kept at the top of the memory, above RAMTOP. By POKEing this part of the memory it is possible to define up to 21 characters, which can then be used in PRINT statements in Basic programs.

The following sub-routine will permit any number of UD graphics to be printed. It can be used in any Basic program, but for demonstration purposes assume that an adventure program is being written, that the program requires the graphic representation of 16 monsters, each using four graphic characters, 16 weapons of one character each and an odd nine graphics each requiring a single character. A total of 89 UD graphics in all. Their names are listed below.

Two blank C 15 cassette tapes and the HORIZONS tape will be needed. Mark the blank tapes one and two. Tape one will store the final demonstration program consisting of three chained parts.

The first will be a simple Basic loader, setting RAMTOP to a new value and loading the other two parts. The second part will be the 89 UD graphics in code and the third part will consist of the sub-routine, together with a test routine to demonstrate it works. Tape two will be a working tape to store code temporarily.

Four squares

The first requirement is to key in the program Loader (Listing 1). It is very short and should present no problem. Line 40 sets RAMTOP to 64823, protecting the 89 UD graphics. This should be saved on tape one by the command SAVE "UDG TEST" LINE 10. It must auto-run. After verification permit the tape to run on for a few seconds then stop it. Do not rewind it. Put tape one to one side.

```
10 REM ************
20 REM ** LOADER **
30 REM ************
40 CLEAR 64823
50 LOAD "UDG89" CODE
60 LOAD "TEST"

SAVE "UDG TEST" LINE 10
```

Listing 1: key in the loader

```
 10 REM **************
 20 REM ** MOVE UDG **
 30 REM **************
 40 CLEAR 64823
 50 LOAD "U1" 64824,160
 60 LOAD "U2" 64984,160
 70 LOAD "U3" 65144,160
 80 LOAD "U4" 65304,160
 90 LOAD "U5" 65464,72
100 CLS
110 PRINT "LOADED READY TO SAVE"
120 PAUSE 0
130 CLS
140 SAVE "UDG89" CODE 64824,712
150 PRINT "ANY KEY TO VERIFY"
160 PAUSE 0
170 CLS
180 VERIFY "UDG89" CODE 64824,712
190 PRINT"OK"
```

Listing 2: the graphics are loaded into the memory

The 89 UD graphics will occupy the top 172 addresses from 64824 to 65535. For clarity number these graphics G1 to G89. When they have been loaded into the memory, the memory map will look like figure 1.

The four graphic squares for the monsters will represent a monster's left top, right top, left bottom and right bottom. Together with the weapons they will have to be entered into the memory in a set running order, keeping the odd nine to the end of the run so that G1 will represent the living skeleton's left top G2 the living skeleton's right top G3 the living skeleton's left bottom G4 the living skeleton's right bottom G5 the spade G6 the mummy's left top and so on, running through all the monsters and weapons in turn. The odd nine graphics follow ending with G88.

the table sets out the running order for all the graphics from G1 to G89. The characters must now be constructed and defined. Use squared paper to draw the graphics first by filling in the squares on a 16 x 16 grid in the case of the monsters and an 8 x 8 grid in the case of the weapons and the odd nine.

When satisfied with the result, LOAD the program characters from the HORIZON tape. Using this program and with the help of the drawings, construct graphics G1 to G20 (monsters and weapons 1 to 4), defining them as graphic A to graphic T.

Save these on tape two as 'u1'. Now repeat the process for G21 to G40 (monsters and weapons 5 to 8) saving them on tape two as 'u2', after 'u1'. Repeat the process for G41 to G60 and G61 to G80, saving them as 'u3' and 'u4'. The odd nine, G81 to G89 should be defined as graphic A to graphic I and saved as 'u5'. On tape two should now be five blocks of UD graphics saved as 'u1', 'u2', 'u3', 'u4' and 'u5', in the correct running order from G1 to G89.

They must now be LOADed into the memory in their proper addresses. Program "MOVE UDG" (Listing 2) will do this. To delete the characters, program switch the computer off and on at the main. Now you can key "MOVE UDG". Line 40 sets ▷

THE ODD NINE		LET A=	GRAPHIC CHARACTER
WIZARD'S LEFT HAND	G81	16	'F'
WIZARD'S RIGHT HAND	G82	16	'G'
MAP (EMPTY CAVE)	G83	16	'H'
MAP (TREASURE)	G84	16	'I'
WALL	G85	16	'J'
PLAYER	G86	16	'K'
STAIRS	G87	16	'L'
HEALING WELL	G88	16	'M'
FIERY PIT	G89	16	'N'

The odd nine graphics which should be entered into memory in a set running order

64823 (RAMTOP)	G1	G2	G3	...	G87	G88	G89

Top addresses: 64824, 64832, 64840, 64848 … 65512, 65520, 65528
Bottom addresses: 64823 (RAMTOP), 64831, 64839, 64847 … 65511, 65519, 65527, 65535

Figure 1 shows what the memory map should look like after the graphics have been loaded

◁ RAMTOP to protect your graphics. RUN the program and having rewound tape two to the beginning, depress the play key on the cassette player.

LINES 50 to LINE 90 will LOAD each of the five blocks into that part of the computer's memory where we wish to store them. The prompt on LINE 110 confirms that all is well. The remainder of the program is a SAVE and VERIFY routine.

Larger program

With tape one in the cassette player set it to record and the depression of any key on the keyboard will SAVE the 89 UD graphics as code. At this stage tape one should contain the Basic Loader SAVEd as "UDG TEST" LINE 10 followed by the UD graphics SAVEd as "UDG89" CODE. Rewind the tape to the beginning and any key on the keyboard will VERIFY "UDG89" CODE. Again permit the tape to wind on a few seconds before stopping.

The sub-routine, to enable all these graphics to be PRINTed, must now be examined. It is anticipated that the routine would form part of a much larger Basic program. Before the routine is called, a variable called A must be set with a value between one and 16, corresponding to the specified monster or weapon.

The routine is called "SET UDG" and is shown in Listing 3. It would be called in any program by the statement GOSUB 40. In LINES 70 and 80 addresses 23675 and 23676 hold a systems variable called UDG which points to the address holding the first byte of graphic A. To make UDG point to address 64824 (the first byte of G1) so that graphic A matches up with G1, it is necessary to POKE 23675,56 and POKE 23676,253. (See page 175 of the *Spectrum Manual*).

If, after NEWing, you enter these two direct commands, you will find that key graphic A will PRINT the Living Skeleton's left top, graphic B the right top, graphic C the left bottom and graphic D the right bottom.

By using PRINT AT statements you can now display the monster anywhere on the screen. To use the same keys to PRINT the corresponding anatomy of the next monster, the mummy, UDG must point 40 bytes further along the memory. The statement POKE 23675,56+40* (a—) will work for the lower values of A. But if the value to be POKEd into 23675 exceeds 255, 1 must be added to the value to be POKEd into 23676 while 256 is subtracted from the value POKEd into 23675.

```
10 REM *************
20 REM ** SET UDG **
30 REM *************
40 LET B=56+40*(A-1)
50 LET C=253
60 IF B>255 THEN LET C=C+1:LET B=B-256:GOTO 60
70 POKE 23675,B
80 POKE 23676,C
90 RETURN
```

Listing 3: the SET UDG routine

```
100 REM **********
110 REM ** TEST **
120 REM **********
130 CLS
140 INPUT "INPUT A (1-16)"; LINE A$
150 IF A$="" THEN GOTO 140
160 IF A$="K" OR A$="L" THEN GOTO 270
170 IF LEN A$>2 THEN GOTO 140
180 FOR D=1 TO LEN A$
190 IF A$(D)<"0" OR A$(D)>"9" THEN GOTO 140
200 NEXT D
210 LET A=VAL A$
220 IF A<1 OR A>16 THEN GOTO 140
230 GOSUB 40
240 PRINT''A;TAB 7;"AB";TAB 21;"E";TAB 7;"CD"
250 IF A=16 THEN PRINT''TAB 7;"FG H I J K L M N"
260 GOTO 140
270 LIST
SAVE "TEST" LINE 130
```

Listing 4: key in lines 100 to 270 of the routine

Various inputs

LINE 60 takes care of this. There is a GOTO statement at the end of this line which returns you to the beginning of the line. For higher values of A the program must run through this line twice. While graphic E will PRINT the 16 weapons by setting the variable A to the corresponding weapon number (see the table), by setting A to equal 16 the odd line (G81-G89) can be PRINTed using graphic keys F to I.

After entering the sub-routine, key in LINES 100 to 270 of the routine called TEST (Listing 4), so that they follow on. LINE 140 invites the INPUT of a value for the variable A. At this stage INPUTting k or l will cause the program to jump to LINE 270 and LIST. LINES 150 and 170 to 220 are error traps and will return the program to LINE 140 for various erroneous inputs.

LINE 230 calls the SET UDG sub-routine and LINES 240 and 250 PRINT the results.

This should now be SAVEd on tape one after 'udg89' CODE by entering as a direct command, SAVE "TEST" LINE 130. The sub-routine can now be tested. To make the test fair RANDOMIZE USR 0 and LOAD tape one in its entirety.

The advantage of this routine lies in the saving of program length and the speed up of operation.

MONSTER	LT	RT	LB	RB	WEAPON		LET A =
LIVING SKELETON	G1	G2	G3	G4	SPADE	G5	1
MUMMY	G6	G7	G8	G9	FIRE WHIP	G10	2
DEMON	G11	G12	G13	G14	SWORD	G15	3
ZOMBIE	G16	G17	G18	G19	SILVER SWORD	G20	4
FIRE ELEMENTAL	G21	G22	G23	G24	SILVER STAFF	G25	5
VAMPIRE	G26	G27	G28	G29	SAINTLY STAFF	G30	6
MIND VAMPIRE	G31	G32	G33	G34	TALISMAN	G35	7
WRAITH	G36	G37	G38	G39	CROSS	G40	8
DRAGON	G41	G42	G43	G44	SHIELD	G45	9
WEREWOLF	G46	G47	G48	G49	TORCH	G50	10
CYCLOPS	G51	G52	G53	G54	INVISIBLE CLOAK	G55	11
SANDMAN	G56	G57	G58	G59	CLUB	G60	12
HARPIE	G61	G62	G63	G64	HOLY WATER	G65	13
GIANT SERPENT	G66	G67	G68	G69	BOW AND ARROWS	G70	14
BALROG	G71	G72	G73	G74	MAGIC SHIELD	G75	15
LICH	G76	G77	G78	G79	EMPTY BOTTLE	G80	16
GRAPHIC CHARACTER	'A'	'B'	'C'	'D'		'E'	

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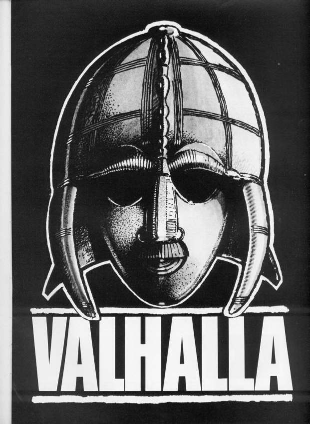
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TRS-80

(* Model 1, ** Model 2, *** Model 3)

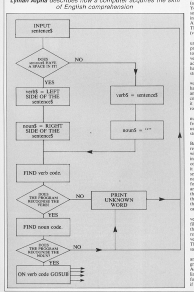
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How a computer develops skills in English

Lyman Alpha describes how a computer acquires the skill of English comprehension



I AM SURE you have wondered at least once while playing an adventure game how the devil you would make a micro understand the English commands and that it might be complicated.

Well, it is not all that difficult to program a computer to interpret English, making it more comprehensible to the computer. I will give you several example routines with differing levels of complexity. But I shall not deal with individual sub-routines for commands such as GET and INVENTORY as they can differ widely with one's needs.

Starting from the basic (verb) (noun) format I shall describe how to deal with even the most complex sentence comprising (verb) (article) (adjective) (noun) (and/then) (........) (and/then) ...format. You should then be able to add a rather sophisticated sub-routine, enabling you to input a sentence such as: GET THE RED APPLE AND EAT IT THEN DRINK THE LEMONADE. (The basics (verb) or (verb) (noun) format)

In order to make the computer understand what you have typed in, the program has to replace the sentence with token numbers. It is vital to tokenise all verbs and nouns you want in your adventure program since the computer can handle numbers much more effectively than strings.

To illustrate this point, let us say that we want the program to GET LAMP and we had assigned numbers 2 to the verb GET and 3 to the noun LAMP. Once you have converted the verb to a number you can use it to lead the computer to the right sub-routine using ON ..... GOSUB ...,.......

The GET subroutine will add item number 3 to your inventory and remove it from that location. Because the program uses token numbers it is more simple and structured.

Take a look at program 1 (written in BBC Basic) and flow chart 1, which deals with replacing simple (verb) (noun) commands with token numbers. The first line after the input of sentence$ is to see if the command consists of a single verb or (verb) (noun). If it is just a single verb let verb$ equal to sentence$, or split sentence$ into verb$ and noun$ respectively. It then finds the tokens for the verb and the noun and sees if they are the words recognised by the program. If they are not it tells you so and goes back to the beginning of the program. The program then uses ON verb code GOSUB ..,... to call the required sub-routine.

The function FNfindverb compares verb$ with words in the dictionary DATA file. If the REPEAT-UNTIL loop gets to the dummy string 12345 then the function returns TRUE. TRUE indicates that the verb was not recognised by the program. The function FNfindnoun does exactly the same for noun$.

Let's add definite and indefinite articles and pronouns so that the commands are grammatically correct and more elegant. Add lines 461 to 464 to program 1. These lines will do everything necessary to cater for the additional format. The line 461 sees if the noun was "IT" then returns the

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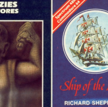
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previous noun code. If there is no previous noun code then it sets it to 0, which is the code for no noun.

Lines 462 to 464 test if the articles come before the noun then gets rid of them. The length of the noun$ is checked because the BBC 0.S has an obscure bug that causes a crush in certain conditions. (See BBC manual under INSTR).

To input a sentence for multiple functions using conjunctions (AND) and (THEN) add procedure PROCandthen and lines 101, 111, and 190 to the original program (see addition 2). The line 101 tests if sentence$ includes (AND) or (THEN), calls PROCandthen and jumps line 120. The line 111 sets sentence$ to nothing. The line 190 tests if there are any more commands left in the sentence$ to deal with and guides the program to the right place.

PROCandthen firstly replaces (THEN) with (AND) if there is any (THEN) in sentence$. It then stores the bit to be sorted out first to temp$ and put the rest back to sentence$ to be dealt with later. The variable temp$ is split up to verb$ and noun$.

Let's add adjectives to make things pretty. I assume that the adjectives are unimportant and are merely cosmetic. Add line 465. This filters out the noun.

Listing 2 is the final version of the sentence interpreter. This should cover most things you are likely to input during an adventure game. It is easy to expand further. What this boils down to is the following: separate the words you have to deal with and replace the words with token code numbers.

The final program is about 2K bytes. But I have used the memory inefficiently to make the program easier to read. You can replace the long variable words, delete the unnecessary lines and use multi-statement lines. It should reduce to about 1K. □

```
   10 REM XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
   20 REM
   30 REM SENTENCE INTERPRETER (1)
   40 REM
   50 REM <VERB> OR <VERB> <NOUN> FORMAT
   60 REM
   70 REM XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
   80
   90
  100 INPUT"INPUT COMMAND",sentence$
  110 IF INSTR(sentence$," ") THEN verb$=LEFT$(sentence$,INSTR(sentence$," ")-1)
:noun$=RIGHT$(sentence$,LEN(sentence$)-INSTR(sentence$," ")) ELSE verb$=sentence
$:noun$=""
  120 verbcode=FNfindverb
  130 IF verbcode=TRUE THEN PRINT"Unknown verb '";verb$;"'":GOTO100
  140 nouncode=FNfindnoun
  150 IF nouncode=TRUE THEN PRINT"Unknown noun '";noun$;"'":GOTO100
  160 PRINT"verb=";verb$;TAB(15)"  verbcode=";verbcode
  170 PRINT"noun=";noun$;TAB(15)"  nouncode=";nouncode
  180 ON verbcode GOSUB 240,250,260,270,280,290
  190 GOTO100
  200
  210
  220 REM ADD YOUR SUBROUTINES HERE
  230
  240 RETURN:REM MOVEMENT SUBROUTINE
  250 RETURN:REM GET SUBROUTINE
  260 RETURN:REM DROP SUBROUTINE
  270 RETURN:REM LOOK SUBROUTINE
  280 RETURN:REM HELP SUBROUTINE
  290 RETURN:REM INVENTORY
  300
  310
  320 DEFFNfindverb
  330 RESTORE 410
  340 I%=0
  350 REPEAT
  360   READ word$
  370   I%=I%+1
  380   UNTIL word$="12345" OR word$=verb$
  390 IF word$="12345" THEN =TRUE
  400 =I%
  410 DATA GO,GET,DROP,LOOK,HELP,INVENTORY
  420 DATA 12345
  430
  440
  450 DEFFNfindnoun
  460 IF noun$="" THEN =0
  470 RESTORE 550
  480 I%=0
  490 REPEAT
  500   READ word$
  510   I%=I%+1
  520   UNTIL word$="12345" OR word$=noun$
  530 IF word$="12345" THEN =TRUE
  540 =I%
  550 DATA NORTH,SOUTH,EAST,WEST
  560 DATA LAMP,GOLD,RING,ARROW,MATCH
  570 DATA 12345
>
```

```
> ADDITION 1 (LINES 461-464)
  461 IF noun$="IT" THEN =nouncode
  462 IF INSTR(noun$,"A ") THEN noun$=RIGHT$(noun$,LEN(noun$)-2)
  463 IF INSTR(noun$,"AN ") THEN noun$=RIGHT$(noun$,LEN(noun$)-3)
  464 IF INSTR(noun$,"THE ") THEN noun$=RIGHT$(noun$,LEN(noun$)-4)

>       ADDITION 2
  101 IF LEN(sentence$)>7 THEN IF INSTR(sentence$," AND ") OR INSTR(sentence$,"
THEN ") THEN PROCandthen:GOTO120
  111 sentence$=""
  190 IF sentence$<>"" THEN GOTO 101 ELSE GOTO 100
  600 DEFPROCandthen
  610 position=0
  620 IF INSTR(sentence$," THEN ") THEN sentence$=LEFT$(sentence$,INSTR(sentence
$," THEN "))+"AND "+RIGHT$(sentence$,LEN(sentence$)-INSTR(sentence$," THEN ")-5)
  630 position=INSTR(sentence$," AND ")
  640 temp$=LEFT$(sentence$,position-1)
  650 sentence$=RIGHT$(sentence$,LEN(sentence$)-position-4)
  660 IF INSTR(temp$," ") THEN verb$=LEFT$(temp$,INSTR(temp$," ")-1):noun$=RIGHT
$(temp$,LEN(temp$)-INSTR(temp$," ")) ELSE verb$=temp$:noun$=""
  670 ENDPROC

>       ADDITION 3
  465 IF LEN(noun$)>2 THEN IF INSTR(noun$," ") THEN noun$=RIGHT$(noun$,LEN(noun$
)-INSTR(noun$," "))
```

SOFTWARE INVENTORY

What's on the way in the adventure world — if you have a new adventure, war game or real-life simulation which you are about to release send a copy and accompanying details to Software Inventory, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Variety in war game scenarios

Adventure *Confrontation* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *MC Lothlorien, 4 Granby Rd, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire.*

HAVING already sampled Lothlorien's wares in the form of Johnny Reb I jumped at the chance of trying out one of their latest offerings, Confrontation.

This is basically a design-your-own-battle package and will do for wargaming what The Quill has done for text adventures.

After loading, the screen displays the seven options available, which include all the necessary routines to enable you to set up and play almost any 20th century battle you can think of.

The final option allows you to load a pre-designed scenario from tape and they have, thoughtfully, included one. Entitled Two Rivers it is a land and air battle revolving around the sovereignty of six cities three of which, initially, are controlled by each side.

Most movement commands can be entered by the cursor keys, which is a welcome simplification.

This is not the type of game where you play against the computer. It is specifically designed for two humans (remember them? They used to live here before we got computers) to sit down and settle their differences on a battlefield.

The two armies are depicted as red and blue forces, along very similar lines to those used by the British Army on manoeuvres.

Unit types are only shown when typing in orders or when actually engaged in combat. Your opponent might know the position of your forces but cannot know what they are until he meets them in battle. This tends to resemble the secrecy one might find in real warfare, which lends itself to some highly tactical play.

For setting up your scenario the package caters for all types of terrain, dwelling and arms, except nuclear which is understandable.

The cassette is value for money and comes in a sturdy case with clear instructions. My review copy had a couple of small bugs but I expect these will have been ironed out in the finished version. **SC**

Gold diggers' delight

Adventure *Greedy Gulch* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£4.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Phipps Associates, 99 East St, Epsom, Surrey.*

EVER SINCE The Hobbit proved that it could be done on a tape-based system companies have been producing graphical adventure games in ever-increasing numbers.

A common theme is to set your adventure way out west, and although some of the results resemble more the antics of Laurel and Hardy than they do a good adventure, Greedy Gulch happily falls into the latter category.

The idea of the game is to find a gold nugget buried out deep in the desert, retrieve it and bring it back to town.

This, as you might imagine, is not as easy as it sounds. Before you can even contemplate going across the desert you'll have to find a map, find the word that the program understands before you can study the map, and then get bored to death while the computer insists on drawing the same picture on the screen about 10 times.

There are plenty of other hazards to overcome in town, and while it's difficult to describe some of them without giving too much away, you will have fun trying to open the safe, read the hotel register, and get some water from the pump.

As the game progresses the problems begin to pile in on you, and if you ever think you've got enough material to contemplate crossing the desert, it's a wise idea to take advantage of the game's LOAD and SAVE features before attempting to go any further.

For each step along the way, after you've reached the mine that hides the precious nugget, you'll have another problem to solve. And you can bet your bottom dollar that the object needed to solve the problem has been left behind in town.

Since the desert at this point is strictly one way (I think), you'll either have to start all over again, or reload a previously saved game.

The graphics presented on the screen are an uneasy mix of pictures of some of the locations and maps of the town. Although the maps are drawn with commendable speed, the locations take much too long to come up, and the detail shown is far from staggering.

The cassette inlay card boasts a 'machine coded English command line scanner', which is supposed to speed up word recognition. It doesn't, and the vocabulary appears to be fairly limited.

One final gripe. Don't try to speak into the program by pressing the caps shift and break key, since all you'll get is a little copyright message on the screen and the program stops. The only solution is to disconnect your Spectrum and start again.

This is not up to the extremely high standards set by The Hobbit, but for just £4.95 you'll get your money's worth. **PG**

Haunting treasure hunt

Adventure *House of Death* **Micro** *Oric 1, 48K only* **Price** *£9.99* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Tansoft Ltd, 3 Club Mews, Market Square, Ely, Cambs.*

THIS game is set in an old house that was once used to film horror movies, but which was abandoned after real hauntings took place.

The aim of the game is to find five treasures and exit with your life.

Once the program has loaded a piece of muted music plays, followed by a hi-res drawing of the exterior of the house. After this its back to text only, accompanied by a time display on the top-left of the screen.

There are occasional sound effects thrown in, but some are so quiet that I was left wondering why they took the trouble to include them.

You begin at the front door, which has a bell and a brass knocker.

Strike the knocker and there is a ding-dong sound. Push the bell and you guessed it knock knock. Maybe it's a poltergeist playing tricks.

The house contains approximately 30 rooms — hardly the vast game promised by the cassette insert. My biggest complaint however, is that finding four of the treasures required little ingenuity. In ▷

◁ fact, I completed this game in just under eight hours.

The program is written in Basic, so the responses are slow. And life is made easier for cheats since neither the CTRL C nor the RESET function are disabled, making it very easy to break into and list the program.

Despite these faults there are some fun moments in this game, and had it been priced around a fiver I would have recommended it as a beginner's game. As it stands though, at £9.99 this game is over-priced. **JM**



Graphics double the fun

Adventure *Twin Kingdom Valley* **Micro** *BBC B* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Bug-Byte, Mulberry House, Canning Place, Liverpool.*

IT SEEMED inevitable that, sooner or later, a graphic adventure would turn up for the BBC machine.

The graphics are the program's main selling marking the 'dawn of a new era in graphic adventures', according to Bug-Byte at least.

There are more than 175 pictures in Twin Kingdom Valley, drawn on the Mode 2 screen. This leaves about 10K for the game (and all the picture information). Even so, this is a perfectly playable adventure.

The setting for the action is a valley ruled by two kings and inhabited by goblins, elves and other standard fantasy creatures. You have a number of strength points to start with, which tend to vanish alarmingly quickly once the game gets going.

There are assorted items of treasure to be collected, which add to your score. At the start there is a list to choose from regarding the format and display of graphics. You can have full graphics, no graphics and long and short descriptions of the locations.

A full list of the program's vocabulary is given both in the game and on the instruction sheet supplied. The sheet also gives a few clues and a general background.

Five command words are given to the graphics. The picture-making capabilities of the computer are exploited excellently in most drawings, which appear very quickly on-screen.

Because, however, the program uses Mode 2, any picture must vanish for text, which is a great shame but unavoidable. Objects and characters are not displayed in the pictures.

The number of objects you can carry is small. The intention is to have them given to the other characters to keep



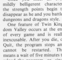
temporarily. To get back you have to use ASK or kill whoever is keeping the object. As far as I can see, they either let you have it or make an attempt to kill you — usually successfully.

Once you meet an even mildly belligerent character, the strength points begin to disappear as he and you battle, dungeons and dragons style.

One feature of Twin Kingdom Valley occurs at the end of every game and is really inexcusable. After you die, or Quit, the program stops and cannot be restarted. This means a wait of five minutes to reload the program, or, since the SAVE and LOAD position commands still work, a LOAD of position at the start of the game. But the omission of 'Another game (Y/N)' is, to me, a pointless one.

Twin Kingdom Valley is an involved and difficult adventure. As the instructions say, 'You are beset by puzzles at every step', which means it will take some time to solve.

The excellent graphics add to the enjoyment, which is only detracted from by the fact that, to stay in the game, you must be extra careful. This adventure is sure to become a classic. **MW**



Warlock casts his spell

Adventure *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£6.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Puffin Books, Penguin Books Ltd, Bath Rd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.*

PENGUIN Books starts with a distinct advantage over most software companies: experience.

This is evident in the excellent packaging of Warlock of Firetop Mountain. It comes in a custom-designed package including the best-selling fighting-fancy game book which inspired it.

The game loads easily and comprehensive instructions are displayed. These are a little formidable, since it takes no less than 19 keystrokes to control the action. When you think you have them memorized you can proceed to the animated adventure.

Your task is to collect 15 keys with which to unlock the warlock's treasure chest, and to escape alive. To do this you control the swift, smooth actions of a little stick-man as you search a vast maze, which is different each time you play. Armed with a sword and a bow you combat the spiders, warriors and slime monsters which try to bar your way. Action is very slick and well animated. The game is compulsive and highly entertaining.

It is also, as some of you may have noticed, rather similar to the popular Halls of the Things. Indeed it is so similar that it would be pointless buying both games.

The great advantage of Warlock is that you get the book as well. It bears scant resemblance to the game, being a kind of solo Dungeons and Dragons type of adventure.

You play it using pencil, paper and dice, with the book providing all the scenarios and problems. The experience is very similar to playing a traditional text adventure. All in all, Warlock of Firetop Mountain is highly recommended. **DD**



The dragon from Warlock of Firetop Mountain

Aladdin's lamp goes out

Adventure *The Stolen Lamp* **Micro** *BBC 32K* **Price** *£6.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *MC Lothlorien, 56A Park Lane, Poynton, Cheshire.*

THE GRAND Vizier has just stolen the Emperor's favourite

lamp. The lamp is an heirloom passed down through the generations since the days of Aladdin.

So starts the adventure of The Stolen Lamp in old Baghdad. As usual it's up to you find and return the lamp and all you have to aid you is an old coin and a hand grenade; seems like a friendly object to be carrying about. Luckily the pin is in, but I suspect you'll end up chucking it at some poor Vizier before the night is out, or perhaps at your micro if things get too tough. 'But problems in old Baghdad are not what they used to be and seasoned adventurers should not have to burn much midnight oil in their lamps to solve this Arabian tale.

The game is a mixture of Mode 7 text and Mode 5 graphics, which of course restricts the amount of store available for the game.

But the result is a rather short game with occasional locations fairly crudely displayed.

The game has SAVE and RESTORE commands to allow it to be continued at a later time. Abbreviations of commands are accepted although this can lead to unfortunate accidents. In response to my command "SMASH PI" (smash pickpocket) this was interpreted as SMASH PIN, and as I was carrying the hand grenade at the time it all got very messy.

I should mention that the pickpocket was quite happy to steal things endlessly from me, even when I didn't have anything to steal. Perhaps they have imported a few Irish pickpockets into the casbah. A small random element has been injected into each new game which changes the effect of some magic words already played. The game has no new surprises.

In some places the game will inform you of the legal commands it will accept, which on occasions tend to give you more clues than you need. My initial response to the game was favourable. At present there are few BBC adventures incorporating graphics.

However, as the graphics are crude I think Teletext graphics would have achieved the same effect, thus releasing more store in which a larger game could have been produced.

The result is a cheap and cheerful adventure with nothing new, which will amuse but not strain the brain cells too much. **AM**

Darkest Africa beckons

Adventure *Jungle Search* **Micro** *Dragon 32* **Price** *£6.00* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Omega Software, 38 Hammond Avenue, Bacup, Lancs.*

YOU ARE the sole survivor of a plane crash in darkest Africa, and the task before you is to find the legendary elephants' graveyard.

Not a very difficult task in this case as you are already equipped with almost everything you might need, and given a list of the commands available for you to use — two lists actually, one on the cassette inlay and another in the program itself (and no, they aren't the same).

This adventure is written in BASIC, but the response times are quite fast as there are so few options available to you. It is almost, but not quite, text only. There is one small sequence of graphics, but you could easily overlook it.

There are various hazards on your way, or rather out of your way in most cases. I discovered after completing a map of the game that the shortest route to the graveyard is only around 20 moves long.

Some of the hazards are invariably fatal, some are occasionally fatal and the rest are mostly very easy to overcome. The wild animals generally die when shot or stabbed, but they are resurrected if you are unwise enough to retrace your steps.

I remember from my schooldays that alpha stood for excellent, beta for good. . . . Omega Software would seem, from this game, to be quite appropriately named.

The plot is uninspired, the location descriptions brief and repetitive, the puzzles unpuzzling, and as there are now so many good adventures available for the Dragon this one really doesn't deserve serious consideration. **MN**

Trilogy scores on strategy and logic

Adventures *Escape from Arkaron, Besieged, Into the Empire* **Micro** *Spectrum 16K or 48K* **Format** *Cassettes* **Price** *£4.95 each* **Supplier** *Puffin Books, Penguin Books Ltd, Bath Rd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.*

THIS trilogy is of the zap and strategy variety. The Korth Empire is invading; can you repel it?

The programs contain one or two nice touches, such as choice of your control keys on the zap games and choice of objective on the strategy game in Escape from Arkaron.

I must say that 'shoot 'em up' games leave me somewhat colder than Skegness on a wet Whit-Monday, but kids seem to like them.

But where the Korth Trilogy really scores is its strategy programs, with at least one on each tape. I'm a great fan of strategy games, and the logic required for kids has got to be educational.

The raid game in part one lets you enter your moves up to six turns in advance, not easy when you don't know what the enemy is doing to do.

I particularly enjoyed Empire, the final program of part three, which is easily the best version I have seen of the Hamurabi genre.

The idea is that the Empire computer has broken down and you have to control production of three essential commodities on 30 individual planets. Full information is available on all 30 planets and overall performance is updated in bar graph form.

I would say that Korth is aimed mainly at the eight to 14 years age group, although there are a couple of programs I shall do again.

The trilogy is presented as a series of program packs. It was released by Puffin Books for the Spectrum, which easily has the biggest market for young computer addicts.

I ought to add that these packages are not adventures. For £4.95 you get a 50 page paperback book which, as you would expect from Puffin, is of excellent quality. You also get a cassette (surprise, surprise), which contains three programs, and both these items come inside a nice plastic display wallet.

The idea is that you read the book and then play the three games which are related to it.

It is not essential to buy all three packages, or even to buy them in order, as they are self-contained. The second and third books give a brief resume of what has gone before. Neither is it essential to read the book before doing the game.

By no stretch of my vivid imagination could I class myself in the age group at which Korth is aimed so my views have to be based accordingly.

My conclusions are that you shouldn't buy Korth if you are expecting a true adventure and, that you shouldn't expect the earth for £4.95. However, at this price they do represent good value. **PM**



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THE DEVIL RIDES IN

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Beat Nelson or Napoleon at their own war games

***Ron Stewart** studied two popular war games and offers tactical advice to the budding general or admiral*

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ago a company called Avalon Hill published, in the United States, the first board wargame called Tactics.

Since then a whole industry has developed to cater for the budding general admiral or squadron leader. The games produced today are as far removed from Tactics as the valve is from the microprocessor. Rulebooks often run to more than 30 pages and allow for most eventualities.

Lone players

Wargaming gives you the chance to see if you would have made a better general than Napoleon or Rommel. Perhaps if you had been captain the Bismark would not have been sunk or your frigate not outgunned by Nelson's Victory. The choice is endless.

Because of the difficulty of finding people prepared to sit down and play these simulations, many gamers have to play solo, trying to optimise the strategy for both sides. This system is, of course, open to abuse. When the computer came along many gamers saw their chance to program the computer to play the other side.

Early computers did have limitations and this idea was not totally successful. In the beginning most experienced gamers were able to beat the computer with ease. Things have now changed and, with the advent of more powerful computers, the programmers are catching up and making the computer more and more difficult to beat.

One of the most prolific companies to produce wargames for the computer is Strategic Simulations Incorporated (SSI). Their games are written, in the main, for the Atari, Apple and TRS80 computers. I will compare one of their offerings, Battle for Normandy, a game simulating the D-Day landings, with a new release on the market called Operation Whirlwind, which is published by Broderbund for the Atari.

Battle for Normandy comes in a flat bookshelf-sized box. In the program disk or cassette, player aid cards and a manual.

The first lesson in wargame strategy is read the manual. Don't try to absorb it all in one reading. Just glance over all the rules and gain a rough idea in your mind of what is going on.

Load the game into the computer, set it on its lowest level and get the feel of moving and firing the units available to you. It will be helpful at this stage to look at the forces at your command and get to know their strengths and weaknesses. This also applies to the enemy forces. Look for a weak point, it may be useful later.

Now go back and reread the instructions fully. In a game such as Battle for Normandy you will have to take into account weather and logistics. If the weather is bad you will not get supplies from the ports across the channel, neither will your forces receive air support.

The manual gives you a percentage probability chart covering the period of the invasion. Keep this in mind when ordering supplies.

Six directions

The most important section of the rules to read is the one setting out your victory conditions. In Battle for Normandy you receive victory points for capturing certain towns and pushing the German forces indland.

Identify these points on the map. When playing the game keep them in mind all the time. If you grab extra points here and there do so, it might make all the difference later.

Movement of both forces on the map is controlled by hexagons. This means that from any point on the map a unit can move in any of six directions. Each unit is allocated movement points. While a unit will only expend one point moving through clear terrain it will use up four crossing a swamp hex.

Terrain also effects the way a unit fights. Units defending in the thick bocage hedgerows that proliferate in Normandy will have their fighting ability doubled while the attackers will have an adverse modifier slapped on them.

Combat in Battle for Normandy is simply executed. Battle is joined when opposite forces come into contact with each other. Every unit on the board has a zone of control. When a unit comes into contact with one of these zones it must stop. The concept is based on the premise that when a force meets another it will be fired upon.

These zones can also effect movement. It will use up more points to disengage a unit from the battle. Each unit has combat points. When battle is commenced the computer looks at all the units taking part and totals their combat points. It then reduces them to a ratio and modifies it for terrain.

A unit's combat effectiveness can be changed if it has not received any supplies either due to the weather or its distance from a supply unit. In Battle for Normandy you can alter the ferociousness of the attack from armed reconnaissance to our all out attack.

Infantry divisions

If all this seems a lot to keep in mind don't worry. After playing the game a couple of times you will soon get the hang of it.

In Battle for Normandy you must capture and hold the towns of Cherbourg, Caen and St Lo. Historically the allies drove east across the Cherbourg peninsula cutting of the city before assaulting it. To do this in Battle for Normandy is wasteful of time and units. The optimum strategy, I have found is to send a couple of strong infantry divisions and an armoured unit around the coast.

The coast hexes are clear terrain and will not modify the German defence points so you will be able to move faster and eliminate the German unit quicker.

In every game I have played so far the computer has only sent one unit north to reinforce the three units defending Cherbourg. Try to take it as early in the game as possible. It gains extra points and we all know what points make don't we?

As well as capturing Cherbourg your forces must clear the Germans out of the coastal zone. To win the game it will also be necessary to capture St. Lo or at least part of Caen.

Other basic strategies can be used to assist you in your fight. Get the four armoured divisions into action as soon as possible, keeping them in the thick of the action as long as possible. Don't waste time in low-odds attacks. All this will do is deplete your units out quickly making them useless in the latter part of the game.

This is a strategy to be kept in mind when playing all wargames. Your units must last the complete game otherwise the enemy

might be tempted to counter-attack. If a unit gets low on strength remove it from the front line and allow it to build up again.

Battle for Normandy is one of the best wargames for beginners to cut their teeth on. It includes most of the features that are found on board wargames. The graphics are good and it will take a lot of time to find the optimum strategy. The variables, such as weather, make each game different and unpredictable.

Superior weapons

Operation Whirlwind is newly released from Broderbund for Atari's 48K. This game is of a more general nature. In fact it is as different from Battle for Normandy as chalk is from cheese.

The map board is once again displayed on the screen and scrolls very smoothly, with roads, streams and woods shown clearly. The forces involved are not named and neither is the time period. You could be fighting the Russians in Stalingrad or the allies in the Ardennes.

Your object is to capture and hold a town against numerically larger forces. Your forces are equipped with superior weapons and firepower. The game can be split into two separate parts. The first is the rush to capture the town. The second is to set up defences for the counter-attack that is sure to follow.

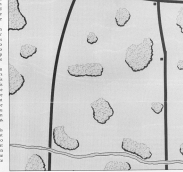
Your forces consist of heavy and medium armour, infantry, artillery and engineers for building bridges. Each type of unit is identified by a different motif. Movement is regulated by squares and not hexes and the combat system has been simplified. Once again terrain affects the units' movement range but when you are getting near the limit the control cursor turns purple. If you proceed any further, the unit in question might not be able to fire in the combat phase.

This game is so freewheeling that it is difficult to define any hard and fast strategy. Your main objective must be to take the town before round 10 of the 35 that make up the game. This is quite easy when you are playing on the easy levels. On the harder ones it becomes an exciting race against time.

Unwary enemy

Once installed in the town you will have to form a defensive wall. It is here that you must take into account the range of the units. I have found it easier to place the heavy long-range tanks just on the outskirts of town with a clear field of fire.

The infantry I place three squares apart. Two squares is the infantry range. This means that anything coming into range can be shot at by two units. When forming a defence such as this, always place units behind the front line in a chequer-board pattern. Second line units can plug any holes that form or fire at an unwary opponent who strays too close.

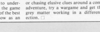


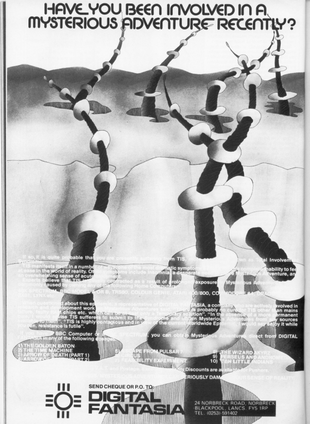
Part of the battle map for Operation Whirlwind with markers depicting points of strategic importance

Overall, Operation Whirlwind is a wargame suited for the novice and experienced wargamer. It is easy to understand and you can start to play the game quickly. The rules booklet is one of the best I have seen and must count now as an industry standard. Not only is it easy to read but there are no less than eight pages of hints and tips on the strategy to use.

Elusive clues

If, like me, you get fed up zapping aliens or chasing elusive clues around a computer adventure, try a wargame and get the old grey matter working in a different direction. □





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Turning fantasy into code

After planning an adventure game you must convert it into a computer program, and ***Andrew Pepper*** *explains how*

ADVENTURE PROGRAMS are a special form of database program. This is why it is quite easy to develop generators, which, given a description of an adventure, will produce a working program.

Normally adventure programs have two main tasks: interpreting the commands typed in by the user and moving the user around the map.

Simple operations

The detailed description of how this is achieved is beyond the scope of this article but a brief description is given as follows: at the simplest level a command from a user consists of two parts the verb (VP) and the noun (NP). For example a typical phrase in adventure games is: GET KNIFE. The adventure program would split this into two parts: GET (VP) KNIFE (NP)

The system would then find the verb part in a list of verbs and GOSUB to a subroutine which obeys it. In our example there would be a subroutine which obeys the "GET" command. It would check the noun part "KNIFE" to make sure you were not already carrying it, check that it was in the room, check that you could carry it and, finally, get it, add it to your list of objects and remove it from the room.

I know this sounds complicated but, in fact, it is a series of simple operations (like most computer programs) and providing you keep your head when writing the code it is quite simple to write. But my main concern is with the development of the database.

```
100 REM ******************************************************
110 REM *** Demo Program 1 - The Ice Planet
120 REM
130 PRINT "*** Demo 1 ***"
135 REM *** Start uo in room 1.
140 r = 1
150 RESTORE
160 FOR i = 1 TO r
170 READ n$. d$. r$
180 NEXT i
185 PRINT
190 PRINT n$
200 PRINT
210 PRINT d$
220 PRINT
225 o$ = ""
230 PRINT "Enter direction (N. E. S. W)":
240 INPUT a$
250 IF a$ = "N" THEN o$ = MID$(r$.1.2)
260 IF a$ = "E" THEN o$ = MID$(r$.3.2)
270 IF a$ = "S" THEN o$ = MID$(r$.5.2)
280 IF a$ = "W" THEN o$ = MID$(r$.7.2)
290 IF o$ = "" THEN 220
300 IFo$ <> "--" THEN 330
310 PRINT "Can't go that wav from here"
320 GOTO 220
330 r = VAL(o$)
340 GOTO 150
400 DATA Transporter Room.You are in orbit around an iced covered planet.--02---
-
410 DATA Planet Surface.You are on an icv plain with a blizzard blowing.--030401
420 DATA Frozen lake.You are bv the edge of a frozen lake. A sign savs thin ice.
--04--02
430 DATA Cave entrance.The cave is dark and forboding.020506--
435 DATA Inside cave.There is a little light from the entrance.----0604
440 DATA Back of cave.You are at the rear of the cave.0507----
450 DATA Top of ice mountain.You are on the peak of an icy mountain.--01--06
```

How the database is organised is something you have to think carefully about. For each room the following is required: the name of the room, a description of the room, the routes to other rooms. There may be more information that you wish to store, a short and long description for example, but we will try to keep it simple.

One way you could organize the data is to have three string arrays to hold the three types of information, say N$ for the name, D$ for the description and R$ for the routes. This allows you to display the name of room 10 by typing: PRINT N$(10). The description is produced by typing: PRINT D$(10).

Alternatives

You could have the contents of the three arrays held in data statements in the program. When the program was RUN the data would be READ into the arrays. But this is inefficient. The data, in effect, is stored twice, once in the source code of the program and again in the array. It is far more efficient to store the data on cassette and load the program in two halves, one part loads the main processing part of the program. When this program is run it loads the second half of the program into the arrays. If your machine can arrange for programs to be LOADed and RUN in one go, this could be done without the user knowing. See figure 1 for a diagram showing this.

An alternative method of storing the database is as a series of DATA statements. To read in the data for a particular room the program starts at the first DATA statement and reads through all of them until it reaches the room required. This is slower than storing the information in an array but makes development easier as the adventure is now one file rather than two.

Four paths

This second technique will be used for our program examples. It is less machine dependent, (the listings with this article are written in ANSI standard Basic, as used on the NewBrain). Designing a database is really about rules what form the database must take. For example, if the rule is made that there can be a maximum of four paths leading from one room (going north, east, south or west) then this information could be held for each room as a string showing the room number to which a particular route will take us. Suppose we are currently in room 10, the route string might look like this: "11 — 0912" The system decodes this into the following form: if you go north then you enter room 11. You cannot go east. If you go south then you enter room nine. If you go west then you enter room 12.

With this in mind look at the simple adventure in program 1. It prints up a description of each location and asks for a direction. It takes the direction you enter

```
100 REM ****************************************************************
110 REM Demo orogram 2. Data decomoression
120 REM
130 PRINT "*** Demo 2 ***"
140 DIM c$(10)
150 c$(0) = "You are in"
152 c$(1) = "the air is"
154 c$(2) = "It is dark"
156 c$(3) = "small"
158 c$(4) = "laroe"
160 c$(5) = "room"
162 c$(6) = "corridor"
240 REM
250 REM **** take in D$ and disolav, decompressing as we oo.
260 REM
263 PRINT
265 PRINT "Enter strino to decompress":
270 LINPUT d$
280 FOR i = 1 TO LEN(d$)
290 IF MID$(d$,i,1) <> "\" THEN PRINT MID$(d$,i,1): : GOTO 400
300 c$ = MID$(d$,i+1,1)
310 c = VAL(c$)
320 PRINT c$(c):
330 i = i + 1
400 NEXT i
410 GOTO 260
```

LOAD
Main Program.

Program Starts
RUNning.

Data is loaded
into array.

and displays the new room you are in.

This is the type of low level program I used when developing a database. It lets me check that the routes make sense and gives me some idea of what the program will be like to use.

One hint when developing this program if you start the DATA statements on a conveniently numbered line-number (say 1001) then it will be easy to find the data statement for a particular room. Room one's data is on line 1001, room two's on 1002 and so on.

If you look at the descriptions of rooms in the example program you will notice that the same phrases crop up several times. It is possible to make use of this fact to compress the data. Commonly occuring phrases are not typed into the data base over and over again. They are stored in a separate array. If we are using C$() to hold the phrases then we could set up the array like this:

C$(0) = "Your are"
C$(1) = "the air is"
C$(2) = "It is dark"
and so on.

We now have to arrange that these phrases can simply be inserted into the descriptions before printing. A simple way is to use a special character as an escape character, which would be treated specially by the system. Suppose we choose the backslash character "/".

The string: "/0 in a small room. /2 and /1 damp." should expand to: You are in a small room. It is dark and the air is damp.

This gives a saving of about 30% over the original . The code that converts the form is very simple and is shown in program 2. When this program is run you will be asked for a string to decompress. Try entering the following: Enter string to decompress? /0 a /3 /5. /2 and /1 cold. The system will produce: You are in a small room. It is dark and the air is cold.

This gives a better than two-to-one compression.

If your machine has an INSTR instruction then it is possible to speed up the search for the escape character. One obvious point. This program assumes that the character following the backslash is a number. If you feed it with a string which has a backslash without a number after it then it will produce a BASIC error.

Planning

If you want more than 10 built-in phrases (/0 to /9) then you could use the letters (/A to /Z). Line 310 in the program will have to be changed to read: 310 c = ASC(c$) — 65 This converts a letter between A and Z to a number between 0 and 25.

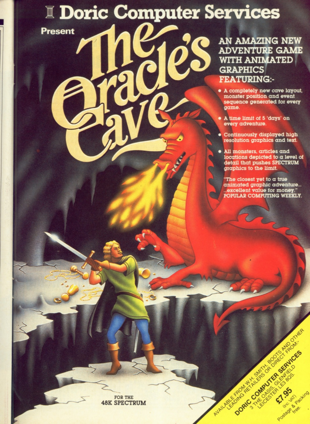
There are some improvements that could be made to the example programs. The description should be split into 30-40 character chunks before being printed, and the coding could be performed in a more compact form. But the programs were designed as examples of the techniques used.

Remember to plan ahead when writing any program. Decide what the program should do before writing it. That way you can tell if it is working or not. From the examples I have given try building up towards a full adventure. Hopefully, it will seem easy, several simple elements linked together.

There are refinements you could add. In role playing games players are given random characteristics: LUCK, STRENGTH, COMBAT and HEALTH for example. These could be used in an adventure game to decide whether a particular task is possible or not. This adds a random factor to the game that should make it interesting to play even when the game is completely mapped out.

Remember that an adventure can be any dream you want to have, writing the game can be an adventure in itself. The user is only a puppet controlled by the program. You are playing God and defining a whole universe.

To obtain a copy of the first part of this article, How to write your own adventure, send a stamped addressed envelope to, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD.


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Programs from readers this month include the second part of Castaway, a game for the ZX Spectrum by Keith Parrock. After a shipwreck you find yourself on a tropical island. While wandering around looking for materials that could be used to repair your boat you stumble across an Inca temple and other indications that the island might be inhabited. Roger Thomas in Sussex has written a program that provides LEFT$, RIGHT$ and MID$ equivalents for the Spectrum.

Send us your adventure listings — modules which readers can incorporate into their own games, short adventures and useful programming routines are all welcome. Please send us a printout and cassette along with a general description of the program and details of how it is constructed and can be used. If you want us to return your program, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you have any queries on the listings, write to the appropriate author, Your Adventures, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Survival in the South Pacific

A ZX Spectrum game from Keith Parrock in Middlesex

IN THE second part of Castaway you begin to explore the island on which your boat has been shipwrecked. While looking for some life necessities you find an Incan temple.

If you would like a copy of the first part of Castaway send a stamped address envelope to Castaway, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD.

```
8052 DATA "battery"
8053 DATA "lizard"
8054 DATA "spear"
8055 DATA "pteranodon"
8056 DATA "mairsail"
8057 DATA "crowbar"

8500 REM SC-STRENGTH-CONDITION

8501 DATA 10,z,z
8502 DATA z,z,z
8503 DATA 10,z,z
8504 DATA z,z,z
8505 DATA 10,z,8
8506 DATA 10,z,z
8507 DATA z,z,z
8508 DATA 10,z,10
8509 DATA 10,z,z
8510 DATA -1,67,z
8511 DATA -1,140,z
8512 DATA -1,200,z
8513 DATA -1,200,z
8514 DATA 10,z,z
8515 DATA z,z,z
8516 DATA z,z,z
8517 DATA z,z,z
8518 DATA z,z,z
8519 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8520 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8521 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8522 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8523 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8524 DATA z,45,z
8525 DATA -1,115,z
8526 DATA -1,155,z
8527 DATA z,49,z
8528 DATA 10,z,11
8529 DATA -1,130,z
8530 DATA z,50,z
8531 DATA 10,60,5
8532 DATA 10,z,7
8533 DATA 10,z,9
8534 DATA 10,z,z
8535 DATA -1,150,z
8536 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8537 DATA 10,z,z
8538 DATA z,65,z
8539 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8540 DATA 10,z,6
8541 DATA 10,z,z
8542 DATA 10,z,z
8543 DATA 10,z,z
8544 DATA 10,z,z
8545 DATA 10,z,z
8546 DATA z,z,fa-cs
8547 DATA z,z,fa-cs
```

An option for string slicing

LEFT$, RIGHT$ and MID$ equivalents for the Spectrum, from Roger Thomas in Sussex.

ALTHOUGH THE Spectrum's system of string slicing is very neat and logical it is quite different from the usual format.

Fortunately this listing solves the problem by giving you equivalents for LEFT$ RIGHT$ and MID$.

```
   1 DEF FN S(A$,A)=((A<=LEN A$)
*A+(A>LEN A$)*LEN A$)

   2 DEF FN L$(A$,A)=A$( TO FN S
(A$,A)*(A<=LEN A$))

   3 DEF FN R$(A$,A)=A$(LEN A$-F
N S(A$,A)+1 TO LEN A$*(A<=LEN A$
))
   4 DEF FN M$(A$,A,B)=(" "+A$)(
FN S(A$,A)+(LEN A$<>1)+(A=0) TO
(FN S(A$,A)+B-1<=LEN A$)*(FN S(F
$,A)+B-1+(LEN A$>1)+(A=0)))

  10 LET N$="LEFT$MID$RIGHT$"
  12 PRINT FN L$(N$,5)
  15 PRINT FN M$(N$,5,4)
  17 PRINT FN R$(N$,6)
  20 STOP
```

```
8548 DATA 10,z,z
8549 DATA 10,z,z
8550 DATA 10,z,z
8551 DATA 10,z,z
8552 DATA 10,z,15
8553 DATA -1,165,z
8554 DATA z,80,z
8555 DATA -1,67,z
8556 DATA 10,z,14
8557 DATA z,z,z

9000 REM [illegible]

9001 DATA "amid the totalwreckag
e of your boat which has been wa
shed ashore. The beach  here st
retches north and south. Ahead t
here is a plateau...",2,10,z,z,1
5,z,z
9002 DATA "some distance from th
e wreckage. A small groupof palm
 trees lies to the east. To the
west lies a small cove...",z,1,3
,5,z,z,z
9003 DATA "among a group of palm
 trees swaying in what  breeze
there is. Coconuts hang  down by
 the hundreds...",4,z,z,2,z,z,z

9004 DATA e$,5,3,6,7,z,z,z
9005 DATA "at a small    cove. T
here are signs of life  here, w
ith the presence of marksin the
sand in the shape of    footpri
nts...",z,4,2,z,z,z,z
9006 DATA e$,z,4,8,z,z,z,z
9007 DATA e$,4,9,z,8,z,z,z
9008 DATA e$,6,72,7,z,z,z,z
9009 DATA e$,7,z,z,z,z,z,z
9010 DATA "overlooking a reef of
f the shore. The water isso clea
r that the bottom of the ocean i
s visible...",1,11,z,z,z,z,z
9011 DATA "standing alongthe sho
re. Facing you the surf  rolls i
n constantly. Tropical   birds f
ly overhead...",10,41,12,z,z,z,z
9012 DATA e$,z,14,13,11,z,z,z
9013 DATA "outside a tinybamboo
hut. There is a door madeof cane
 facing you...",57,z,z,12,z,z,z
9014 DATA e$,z,z,z,12,z,z,z
9015 DATA "standing atop a plate
au. Below your wreckage  is clea
rly visible. From this   vantage
 point the ocean fills   the vie
w to the horizon. Tiny   round m
arks can be seen in the  sand...
",z,17,16,z,z,1,z
9016 DATA "on the other  side of
 the plateau. The beach  is no l
onger in sight...",z,18,z,z,15,z
,z
9017 DATA "slowly sinkinginto dr
y sand. Inch by inch you are bei
ng buried alive by the   sliding
 sand...",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9018 DATA "at the edge ofa dense
 jungle. The sunlight is only ju
st visible through the   thick g
rowth of vegetation...",16,z,19,
z,z,z,z
9019 DATA p$,20,26,24,18,z,z,z
9020 DATA p$,21,19,23,z,z,z,z
9021 DATA p$,z,z,22,20,z,z,z
9022 DATA p$,z,21,59,23,z,z,z
9023 DATA p$,20,z,22,24,z,z,z
9024 DATA p$,19,23,z,z,z,25,z
9025 DATA "outside an    Inca te
mple. By chance you have found i
t, hidden deep in the    jungle.
 It's walls are made of  white s
tone, sloping towards thesky..."
,z,z,z,z,24,27,z
9026 DATA "at a clearing in the
jungle. A huge tree facesyou, it
s leaves reaching to the ground.
 Its top is out of sight far abo
ve...",19,z,z,z,z,z,z
9027 DATA "inside the    temple.
 Torches burn from wall  bracket
s to provide light to seeby. sev
eral piles of various    weapons
 are scattered over the  granite
 floor. From the east endcold ai
r meets your face...",z,z,28,z,2
5,z,16
9028 DATA "in a narrow   corrido
r, sloping downwards. Thelight i
s failing here, making   each st
ep slow and ponderous...",z,z,z,
27,z,29,z
9029 DATA k$,z,z,31,33,z,30,z
9030 DATA k$,z,z,z,z,29,z,z
9031 DATA k$,29,36,z,32,34,z,z
9032 DATA "in an inner   chamber
, deep inside the temple.There i
s a sign upon the temple wall...
",105,105,31,105,105,105,2
9033 DATA k$,z,37,29,z,z,z,z
9034 DATA k$,z,z,z,39,35,31,z
9035 DATA "in the centre of what
 must once have been the Inca's
sacrifice chamber. One   single
block of white granite   stands
before you...",z,40,37,z,36,34,z
9036 DATA "at a clearing in the
jungle. Several trees arelying a
round, chopped down very recentl
y...",23,z,95,z,z,z,z
9037 DATA k$,z,35,33,z,z,z,z
9038 DATA "in a side roomoff the
 main chambers. There is a stron
g smell of dead meat and a pile
of droppings reaching up the wal
l in the far corner...",31,z,z,z
,z,z,z
9039 DATA "sinking in a  sea of
sand. Unless you have    with yo
u something to clear the sand it
 would seem only a matterof time
...",z,z,z,z,61,z,z
9040 DATA "sinking in a  sea of
sand. Unless you have    with yo
u something to clear the sand it
 would seem only a matterof time
...",z,z,z,z,61,z,z
9041 DATA "by a large    cove. S
urf laps against the rockedge, a
nd there is an engraving cut int
o the rock...",11,62,42,z,z,z,z
9042 DATA "at the openingto the
caves. Water flows down  into th
e entrance, which is justwide en
ough to enter...",z,z,43,41,z,z,
50
9043 DATA c$,z,42,44,54,z,z,z
9044 DATA c$,43,49,47,45,z,z,z
9045 DATA c$,55,44,46,z,z,z,z
9046 DATA c$,z,47,56,45,z,z,z
9047 DATA c$,44,48,46,z,z,z,z
9048 DATA "at the north  edge of
 a wide chasm. Across theother s
ide is a small ledge wideenough
to travel along...",z,50,z,47,z,
z,z
9049 DATA c$,z,z,44,z,z,z,z
9050 DATA "at the south  edge of
 a wide chasm. A ladder  of rope
 forms a kind of bridge  over wh
ich you may cross...",48,z,51,53
,z,z,3
9051 DATA "in a side cavewith sl
imy walls. It is quite   damp in
 here...",52,z,z,50,z,z,z
9052 DATA "facing solid  rock. T
he only exit is the way  you cam
e in...",z,51,z,z,z,z,z
9053 DATA "facing solid  rock. T
he only exit is the way  you cam
e in...",z,z,50,z,z,z,z
9054 DATA "facing solid  rock. T
he only exit is the way  you cam
e in...",z,z,43,z,z,z,z
9055 DATA "facing solid  rock. T
he only exit is the way  you cam
e in...",z,45,z,z,z,z,z
9056 DATA "facing solid  rock. T
he only exit is the way  you cam
e in...",z,z,z,46,z,z,z
9057 DATA "inside the    bamboo
hut. In a corner you see the rem
ains of a hurried meal.  Sand li
nes the floor...",z,13,z,z,z,z,1
9058 DATA "diving around the ree
f. A shark swims by, not noticin
g you in the clear, blue ocean s
urf...",z,z,z,z,z,z,4
9059 DATA "in a deep man made pi
t. The sides are made of hard ea
```
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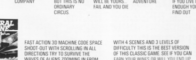
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```
◁ rth and the top is four  feet ab
ove your head. Facing youis a si
gn carved into the mud...",z,z,z
,z,60,z,z
9060 DATA p$,8,z,z,z,z,z,12
9061 DATA "in an escape  hatch,
after using the bucket tobail ou
t most of the sand...",36,z,z,z,
z,z,13
9062 DATA "following the shore l
ine, as it bends first  one way
, then the other...",41,z,63,z,z
,z,z
9063 DATA "finally at theend of
the shore. To the east isa large
 fall of rocks. Mist is  spreadi
ng across the ground...",z,z,64,
62,z,z,z
9064 DATA "facing a largerock fa
ll. The way from here is narrow
and littered with many   fallen
boulders...",z,66,65,63,91,z,z
9065 DATA "the other sideof the
fallen rocks. Most exits are blo
cked and dangerous...",64,z,z,z,
z,z,z
9066 DATA "in what must  be some
 sort of burial grounds. You are
 in the north corner and high sc
affold constructions riseabove y
ou all around...",64,69,67,z,z,z
,z
9067 DATA "in the east   corner
of the burial grounds.   Here an
d there you can see a    funeral
 pyre...",z,66,105,66,z,z,z
9068 DATA "in the west   corner
of the burial grounds.   The gro
und here has been made   flat by
 tramping feet, and the  movemen
t of heavy objects...",67,105,10
8,69,z,z,z
9069 DATA "in the south  corner
of the burial grounds.   Smoke d
rifts across towards you.The mis
t is once again rising   here...
",66,71,68,70,z,z,z
9070 DATA "on the very   perimet
er of the burial grounds.You beg
in to hear the sound of  the sur
f. The ocean must be nearat hand
...",105,z,69,63,z,z,z
9071 DATA "at the high   altar.
A plain block of granite stands
before you. Steps lead uptowards
 the huge stone. To the  south t
here is open ground...",69,92,z,
z,105,z,z
9072 DATA "on the far    side of
 the island. Dust rises  in the
distance and is blown    high by
 the wind...",z,73,8,76,z,z,z
9073 DATA "on the north  end of
a small air strip. It is overgro
wn with vegetation but nodoubt s
till useable...",72,74,z,z,z,z,z
9074 DATA "at the south  end of
the air strip. Work has  been un
dertaken along this side to prep
are the landing strip foruse at
some time...",73,z,z,75,z,z,z
9075 DATA "right in the  centre
of the only runway. The  wreckag
e of a small private jet is off
to one side...",76,z,74,z,z,z,z
9076 DATA "at the east   end of
a small air strip. In thedistanc
e you see the wreckage ofa small
 aircraft...",z,75,72,77,z,z,z
9077 DATA "at the west   end of
a small air strip. Fieldsare to
the left, where the air  strip e
nds...",z,78,76,z,z,z,z
9078 DATA "on unsteady    ground.
 Beneath your feet the   ground
seems to move and nowhereis safe
...",77,79,80,z,z,z,z
9079 DATA "at the edge ofa very
large swamp. Movement is slow an
d precarious...",78,z,81,z,z,z,z
9080 DATA "once more on apatch o
f unsteady ground. All   around
this area the earth underyour fe
et is as a giant sponge..",z,81,
86,78,z,z,z
9081 DATA "in the heart  of the
swamp. Your shoes vanish briefly
 with each step...",80,82,85,79,
z,z,z
9082 DATA "on a patch of ground
with beaten down grass.  The rem
ains of small animals liescatter
ed nearby...",81,z,83,84,z,z,z
9083 DATA "sinking into  the swa
mp. The more you strugglethe qui
cker your movement to thebottom.
 It is obvious there is  no way
to escape from here...",z,z,z,z,
z,z,z
9084 DATA "at the edge ofthe swa
mp. It is as much as you can do
to put one foot in front of the
other...",85,z,82,z,z,z,z
9085 DATA "at the centre of the
swamp area. You see smokedriftin
g up from somewhere closeby...",
86,84,90,81,z,z,z
9086 DATA "in a camp siteby a cl
earing in the swamp. A   fire st
ill smoulders, and two   tin mug
s of coffee rest on the  top of
a nearby log...",87,85,z,80,z,z,
z
9087 DATA "at the edge ofthe swa
mp area. The camp fire issmoulde
ring still close by...",z,86,88,
89,z,z,z
9088 DATA "in a clearing by the
swamp. The ground is morefirm he
re...",z,z,z,87,z,z,z
9089 DATA "sinking in theswamp.
There is no escape. The  more yo
u struggle against it thefaster
you sink down...",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9090 DATA "sinking into  the swa
mp. You grab for any handhold, b
ut there are none. The   end is
close now...",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9091 DATA "buried under  a pile
of rocks. Suffocation is slow. T
here is no way out from  under h
ere!",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9092 DATA "looking at a  lush gr
een valley ahead, which  spreads
 out before you. The     grass i
s waist high...",97,z,93,98,z,71
,z
9093 DATA "standing on   the out
er limits of the valley. The gra
ss appears flattened by  somethi
ng with round, very heavyfeet...
",z,96,94,92,z,z,z
9094 DATA "following the edge of
 the valley. Bones lie onthe gro
und, and the smell of    death l
ingers in the air...",z,95,z,93,
z,z,z
9095 DATA "facing the     largest
 nest you have ever seen.The occ
upants, although still   obvious
ly chicks, are extremely large a
nd bat-like...",94,z,36,z,z,z,z
9096 DATA "moving deeper into th
e valley. The grass is a little
shorter now, making it   easier
to find your bearings...",93,101
,z,97,z,z,z
9097 DATA "deep into the valley.
 A large bird flies over and rou
nd marks appear on the   ground.
..",100,92,96,98,z,z,z
9098 DATA "at the edge ofthe lus
h valley. It is strangelysilent
here, as though time did not exi
st or had stood still...",92,99,
97,z,z,z,z
9099 DATA "now having    reached
 the far side of the lushvalley.
 A large bird flies over your he
ad and disappears over a distant
 hill...",98,z,100,z,z,z,z
9100 DATA "in a place    which h
as been forgotten by timealtoget
her. Broken vegetation   can be
seen all around. A deep  mist sp
reads across the ground  towards
 you...",104,97,101,99,z,z,z
9101 DATA "in a strange  part of
 the valley. The ground  has cra
cked open, leaving a     crater ▷
```

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```
◁ just narrow enough to    jump...",96,103,102,100,z,z,z
9102 DATA "dying at the bottom of a large crater. It wasobviously wider than it seemed..",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9103 DATA "bleeding to   death after a fall down into thecrater which has broken both    your legs...",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9104 DATA "being eaten byone of the dinosaurs. How ever  painful the experience is, you  will not have to suffer long...",z,z,z,z,z,z,z
9105 DATA "",z,z,z,z,z,z,60

9700 REM [illegible]

9705 LET res=res+1: IF res>3 THEN GO TO 9730
9710 PRINT '"Do you wish me to resurrect you?": PAUSE 0
9715 IF INKEY$="y" THEN GO TO 9728
9720 IF INKEY$="n" THEN GO TO 9990
9725 GO TO 9715
9728 LET l=1: LET sc=sc-5: IF sc<0 THEN LET sc=0
9729 PRINT ': GO TO 50
9730 PRINT '"I'm sorry, but I have no power  left to resurrect you further.  This time I'm afraid it really  is the end....": FOR d=1 TO 100: NEXT d: GO TO 9990

9800 REM INTRODUCTION

9805 INK 1: PAPER 7: BORDER 7: CLS
9810 PRINT "WELCOME TO [illegible]"
9820 PRINT '"IN THIS ADVENTURE YOU HAVE BEEN SHIPWRECKED OFF A SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND. THE WRECKAGE FROM YOUR  BOAT IS WASHED UP ON SHORE. SOMEOF THE ITEMS MAY BE USEFUL AND  IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO REPAIR THEBOAT IF YOU CAN LOCATE THE STOCKOF EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO DO SO."
9830 PRINT "SCATTERED AROUND THE ISLAND YOU WILL FIND ALL THE REQUIREMENTS  TO ENABLE YOU TO SET SAIL."
9840 PRINT '"GATHER THIS EQUIPMENT AT YOUR   WRECK AND WORK ON THE REFIT.    WHEN YOU HAVE FOUND IT ALL YOU  CAN CAST OFF. BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO ESCAPE THE CHASING NATIVES."
9850 PRINT INK 2'"NOW PRESS A KEY TO BEGIN YOUR   LONG AND HOPEFUL SEARCH......"
9860 PAUSE 0: CLS : PRINT "DO YOU WISH TO RESTORE A        PREVIOUSLY SAVED ADVENTURE?"
9870 INPUT r$: IF r$="y" THEN PRINT AT 2,0;"PRESS ENTER AND START TAPE": PAUSE 0: CLS : LOAD "c"
9880 IF r$="n" THEN CLS : RETURN

9890 GO TO 9870

9900 REM HELP FEATURE

9901 IF l>=1 AND l<16 THEN PRINT '"The grass is always greener on  the other side of the hill": GO TO 1000
9902 IF l>=16 AND l<27 THEN PRINT '"Tarzan use to swing on them": GO TO 1000
9903 IF l>=27 AND l<39 THEN PRINT '"Beware of Inca Spirits": GO TO 1000
9904 IF l=39 OR l=40 THEN PRINT '"You need something to hold the  sand": GO TO 1000
9905 IF l>=41 AND l<57 THEN PRINT '"Aladdin worked wonders with one of these": GO TO 1000
9906 IF l>=64 AND l<72 THEN PRINT '"Holy places require holy acts": GO TO 1000
9907 IF l>=72 AND l<82 THEN PRINT '"Watch your east-west passage": GO TO 1000
9908 IF l>=92 AND l<102 THEN PRINT '"Long ago strange creatures livedin such places as this": GO TO 1000
9909 IF l=83 OR l=89 OR l=90 OR l=102 OR l=103 THEN PRINT '"You are passed help now!": GO TO 1000
9910 PRINT '"Sorry, but I'm a stranger here  myself"
9915 GO TO 1000
9920 REM EXTRA COMMANDS

9925 IF s$="pull" THEN PRINT "If you do, you'll split it"
9930 IF s$="run" THEN PRINT "You coward"
9935 IF s$="shout" THEN PRINT "I would not do that if I were    you. You may awaken something   nasty"
9940 IF s$="search" THEN PRINT "That is not the way to find out about things"
9945 IF s$="hit" THEN PRINT "Violence is the last resort of  reason"
9950 IF s$="climb" THEN PRINT "Everest isn't in this adventure"
9955 GO TO 1000

9980 REM END GAME

9981 CLS : PRINT AT 15,0;"You have collected enough usefulmaterial to unable you to repairyour wrecked boat. It took you  ";mov;" moves."
9982 PAUSE 220: POKE 23692,255: PRINT ''''''''''''''''''''''''"After some weeks, boat restored to something like its former   condition, you set sail for homeusing the chart and compass."
9983 PAUSE 400: POKE 23692,255: PRINT ''''''''''''''''"As you cast off, taking one lastlook at the island which has    been your home these past few    months, you catch sight of one   native, then another running    into the surf after you. These  two are closely followed by     several more."
9984 PAUSE 750: POKE 23692,255: PRINT '''''''''''''''''''''''''"Their spears are thrown, but youare too far out now to be caughtby them.''"Finally, they give up the hunt, and return to the sandy beach."
9985 PAUSE 400: POKE 23692,255: PRINT ''''''''''''''''''''''''''"Safe at last, you sail on, boundfor home...."
9986 PAUSE 150: POKE 23692,255: PRINT ''''''''''''''''''''TAB 16;"Pleasant trip."'TAB 20;"Goodbye..."

9987 GO TO 9987

9988 REM QUIT GAME

9990 PRINT "You scored ";sc;" out of 250": PRINT "in ";mov;" moves": PRINT "Do you wish to start again?"
9991 LET m$=INKEY$: IF m$="" THEN GO TO 9991
9993 IF m$( TO 1)="y" THEN GO TO 5
9994 IF m$( TO 1)="n" THEN GO TO 9994
9995 GO TO 9991

9996 REM SAVE GAME

9997 SAVE "b" LINE 50
9998 CLS : PRINT AT 9,10;"ADVENTURE SAVED";AT 11,13; FLASH 1;"STOP TAPE": FOR d=1 TO 350: NEXT d: CLS : GO TO 50□
```

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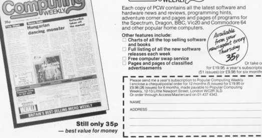
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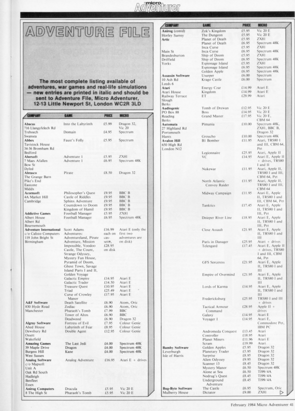
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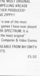
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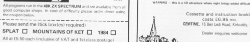
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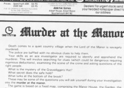
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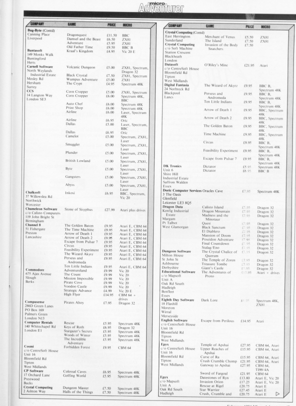
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Quality Software	Ali Baba	£24.95	Atari E + drives
c/o CentreSoft House			
Unit 16			
Bloomfield Rd			

COMPANY	GAME	PRICE	MICRO
Quality Software (Contd)			
Tipton			
West Midlands			
Quicksilva	Trader	£9.95	ZX81, Spectrum
Palmerston Park House	Trader	£14.95	Vic 20
13 Palmerston Rd	Pioneer Trail	£3.95	ZX81
Southampton	Ocean Trader	£3.95	ZX81
Hampshire	Smuggler's Cove	£6.95	Spectrum 48K
	Velnor's Lair	£6.95	Spectrum 48K
	Xadom	£6.95	Spectrum 48K
	Ring of Power	£9.95	CBM 64
Red Shift	Apocalypse	£9.95	Spectrum 48K, BBC B
12C Manor Road			
London N16	Apocalypse Expansion: Maps	£4.95	Spectrum 48K
	Apocalypse Expansion: Ancient Scenarios	£4.95	Spectrum 48K
	Apocalypse Expansion: Modern Scenarios	£4.95	Spectrum 48K
Red Shift	Apocalypse	£9.95	BBC
c/o Soft Machine			
Station Crescent			
Blackheath			
London			
Rocklan	Wizard of Wor	£29.95	Atari E + drives
c/o CentreSoft House			
Bloomfield Rd			
Tipton			
West Midlands			
Romik Software	Tombs of Xeiops	£6.99	CBM 64
272 Argyll Ave	Fool's Gold	£6.99	CBM 64
Slough	The Golden Apples of Zeus	£4.99	Vic 20, 8, 16K
Berks			
	Animal Magic	£5.99	Vic 20, 16K
	Zorgon's Kingdom	£6.99	Vic 20, 8, 16K
	3D Monster Chase	£6.99	Spectrum 16, 48K
	3D Monster Craze	£9.99	Lynx
	White Crystal	£6.99	Dragon 32
	Strategic Command	£6.99	Dragon 32
	Sub	£5.99	Spectrum 16, 48K
Salamander	Franklin's Tomb	£9.95	Dragon 32, Oric 48K, BBC B
17 Norfolk Rd			
Brighton	Wizard War	£7.95	Dragon 32
Sussex	Lost in Space	£9.95	Dragon 32
	Everest	£7.95	Dragon 32
	Night Flight	£7.95	Dragon 32
	737 Flight Simulator	£9.95	BBC B
Saturn Software	Tomb of Tuthmosis	£5.50	Dragon 32
Sycamores	Wax Works	£5.50	Dragon 32
Somersham	Volcano Island	£7.00	BBC B
Cambs			
Severn Software	Grail	£6.95	Oric 48K
5 School Crescent	Moria	£4.95	Spectrum
Lydney	Moria	£6.95	Oric 48K
Glos			
Shards Software	Pettigrew's Diary	£7.95	Dragon 32
189 Eton Rd			
Ilford			
Essex			
Richard Shepherd Software	Super Spy	£6.50	Spectrum 48K
	Transylvanian Tower	£6.50	Spectrum 48K
Elm House	Everest Ascent	£6.50	Spectrum 48K
23-25 Elmshott Lane	Ship of the Line	£4.95	Spectrum
Cippenham	Ship of the Line	£6.50	Spectrum 48K, CBM 64
Slough			
Berks	Invincible Island	£6.50	Spectrum 48K, CBM 64
	Devils of the Deep	£6.50	Spectrum 48K
Sierra On-Line Systems	Mission Asteroid	£17.95	Atari plus drives
	Mission Asteroid	£14.35	Apple plus drives
c/o Softsel	Mystery House	£17.95	Apple plus drives
Central Way	Wizard and Princess	£23.70	Atari, Apple (both plus drives)
Feltham			
Middx	Cranston Manor	£28.75	Atari plus drives
	Cranston Manor	£25.50	Apple plus drives
	Ulysses and the Golden Fleece	£25.50	Apple, IBM PC (both plus drives)
	Time Zone	£71.95	Apple plus drives
Silverlind	Haunted House	£6.00	BBC B
156 Newton Rd	Journey to the Stars	£6.50	BBC B
Burton-on-Trent	Passport to Death	£6.50	BBC B
Staffs	Pentiles	£6.50	BBC B
	Othello	£6.95	BBC B
Sinclair	Embassy Assault	£4.95	Spectrum
Stanhope Rd	(also see under		
Camberley	Psion and Artic)		
Surrey			
Sirius	Fantastic Voyage	£27.95	Atari E + drives
c/o CentreSoft House			
Unit 16			

COMPANY	GAME	PRICE	MICRO
Sirius (Contd)			
Bloomfield Rd			
Tipton			
West Midlands			
Soft Toys	The Lair	£6.00	Vic 20
14 Lockharton Ave	Star Warp II	£6.00	Vic 20
Edinburgh			
Software For All	JR	£6.95	BBC
72 North St	Space Kingdom	£7.95	BBC B
London N6	Area Radar Controller	£6.95	BBC B
Spectrum	Realms of the Undead	£5.50	Spectrum 48K
c/o CentreSoft House			
Unit 16			
Bloomfield Rd			
Tipton			
Sulis Educational Software	Time Traveller	£7.95	Spectrum, BBC
4 Church St			
Abbey Green			
Bath			
Superb Software	The Island	£10.00	CBM 64
9B Oval Rd			
London NW1			
Supersoft	Goblin Towers	£9.95	CBM 64
Winchester House	Streets of London	£9.95	CBM 64
Canning Rd	Forestland	£9.95	CBM 64
Wealdstone	Cosmic Capers	£7.95	CBM 64
Harrow	Cracks of Fire	£7.95	CBM 64
Middlesex	Catacombs	£27.00	Pet + drives
	Weird Wood	£25.00	Pet + drives
	Cornucopia	£35.00	Pet + drives
	Goblin Towers	£14.00	Pet + drives
	Cosmic Capers	£16.00	Pet + drives
	Cracks of Doom	£16.00	Pet + drives
Swifty	Space Module 1	£18.95	Atari E + drives
c/o Mapsoft			
Unit A			
Oak Rd South			
Hadleigh			
Benfleet			
Essex			
Synapse	Shamus I	£24.95	Atari, CBM 64
c/o CentreSoft House	Shamus II	£24.95	Atari E
Unit 16	Necromancer	£24.95	Atari E
Bloomfield Rd			
Tipton			
West Midlands			
Temptation Software	Dungeons of Doom	£5.95	Spectrum 48K, ZX81
27 Cinque Ports St			
Rye	Admiral Graf Spee	£5.95	Spectrum 48K ZX81
East Sussex			
	Special Mission	£5.95	TI99/4A E
	Baron	£5.95	Spectrum 48K, ZX81
Terminal Software	Curse of the Werewolf	£9.95	Vic 20 E
28 Church Lane	Rescue from Castle Dread	£9.95	Vic 20 E
Prestwich			
Manchester	Magic Mirror	£9.95	Vic 20 E
	Nosferatu	£9.95	Vic 20 E
	Space Island	£6.95	Spectrum 48K
	Vampire Village	£6.95	Spectrum 48K
Ultimate	Atic Atac	£5.50	Spectrum 48K
The Green	Lunar Jetman	£5.50	Spectrum 48K
Ashby-de-la-Zouch			
Leics			
Virgin Games	Castle Adventure	£6.95	Dragon 32
61-63 Portobello Rd			
London W11			
Wintersoft	Ring of Darkness	£9.95	Dragon 32
30 Uplands Park Rd	Operation Gremlin	£6.95	Oric 48K
Enfield			
Middx			
Work Force	Adventure in Time	£7.00	ZX81, Spectrum 48K
140 Wilsden Ave			
Luton	Pirate Island	£6.50	Spectrum 48K
Beds			

NOTES TO THE TABLE

Atari: the programs will run on either the Atari 400 or 800 unless E is specified, in which case extra memory is needed for the 400.

BBC: the programs will run on either of the BBC micros unless the model B is specified, in which case extra memory is needed on the model A.

Drives: if a program needs a disk drive system this is specified in the micro column.

Spectrum: the programs will run on either Spectrum, □

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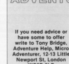
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COMING SOON . . .

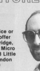
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ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO MEET THE MOP??*!?

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ADVENTURE HELP



If you need advice or have some to offer write to Tony Bridge, Adventure Help, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD



THIS MONTH I'll look at the kind of problems — and some of the solutions encountered when playing adventures.

Adventure programs often let you stumble about in the dark for only a short time, or a couple of turns before deciding that you haven't the faintest idea of how to proceed and dumping you unceremoniously in the nearest ice-cold underground stream.

But what's this — something else comes up on the screen:
YOU ARE IN A SMALL CAVE. THERE IS A SMALL WOODEN BOX HERE. TO THE NORTH YOU SEE AN UNDERGROUND STREAM FLOWING THROUGH A SMALL CRACK IN THE ROCK. THROUGH THE CRACK YOU CAN JUST MAKE OUT SOMETHING GLITTERING IN THE DARK BEYOND.
WHAT NOW?

He!He Some treasure! Must get it! Flushed with justifiable pride at our success at using the octopus, we attack the next problem with gusto. How are we going to get at that gold in the next cave?

We can try the direct route, by typing:

N(for NORTH)

YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY WHAT NOW?

That's a bit of a blow. The computer, darn it, doesn't seem very impressed with our previous brilliant deductions, and is already putting more problems our way! There must be a way through the crack. Maybe we are carrying too many goodies, and we can't squeeze through.

DROP ALL
O.K.
WHAT NOW?
N
YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY
WHAT NOW?

Hmm, this is getting silly. Is there anything to help us in the cave? There's a little pile of treasure on the floor which we dropped a few moments ago, but none of that is useful to us now. Wait, there's a box, isn't there. How could we have forgotten that?

EXAMINE BOX

YOU SEE A SMALL WOODEN BOX.

THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL.

Computers can be very pedantic!

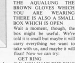
OPEN BOX

O.K. THE BOX IS OPEN. INSIDE YOU SEE AN AQUALUNG.

Aqualung! Underground stream?

GET AQUALUNG

YOU ARE CARRYING: THE AQUALUNG THE BROWN GLOVES WHICH YOU ARE WEARING THERE IS ALSO A SMALL BOX WHICH IS OPEN



Wait a moment, though, the box might be useful. We're told it is small but maybe it will carry everything we want to take with us, and maybe it will float! Now we can try:

GET RING
O.K. YOU HAVE THE RING
WHAT NOW?
PUT RING IN BOX
O.K.
WHAT NOW?
LOOK

and we get the same list as before, but with a difference at the end:

AND A SMALL BOX WHICH IS OPEN. IT CONTAINS THE GOLDEN RING

A series of interlocking problems that eventually yield results is a typical format for most traditional adventures.

ADVENTURE CONTACT

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Knight Quest **Problem** What does one say or do to use the boat moored at the lake? **Name** Stephen Lowe **Address** 13 Broadwalk, Saltash, Cornwall.

MICRO Vic 20 **Adventure** Space Hero **Problem** How do you make the dragon sleep and what do you do with the solar power cell and the ray gun? **Name** Martin Lanni **Address** 71 Valley Drive, Kendal, Cumbria.

MICRO Atari **Adventure** USS Sorceress **Problem** How do you get past the cement wall in the space pirate's castle? **Name** John Firth **Address** White Lea, Rudgwick, West Sussex.

MICRO Spectrum **Adventure** Planet of Death **Problem** How do you get out of the prison cell? How do you get out of the shed with the laser? **Name** S Laock **Address** 8 Seagry Close, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol.

MICRO Spectrum ZX, 48K **Adventure** The Hobbit **Problem** What or where is the carrock? **Name** Mark Haggett **Address** 1 Tappers Lane, North Petherton, Somerset.

MICRO ZX81 16K **Adventure** Espionage Island (Adventure D) **Problem** How can I cross the swamp without drowning? Does the graffiti have any significarfce? **Name** Ross Colledge, Dalkeith, Lothians.

MICRO ZX Spectrum **Adventure** Planet of Death, The Hobbit **Problem** How do I escape from the barred cell and the goblins' dungeon? **Name** Mark Robertson **Address** Churchtown Close, Dublin, Ireland.

MICRO ZX81 **Adventure** Espionage Island **Problem** How do you go down stream without being shot by a patrolling helicopter and how do you see in the dark corner of the aircraft wreckage? **Name** Danny Gray **Address** Elangeni, Vicarage Rd, Gt Hockham, Thetford, Norfolk.

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Valhalla **Problem** What is the use of the jewels? **Name** S. Dale **Address** 131 Glebe Rd, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.

MICRO Spectrum **Adventure** Knights' Quest **Problem** I am at the deserted wasteland with a horse, compass and a coiled rope. What should I do with the rope? **Name** M. Roberts **Address** 15 Ruffa Lane, Pickering, Yorkshire.

MICRO BBC B **Adventure** Castle of Riddles **Problem** I cannot map the jet-black maze. I have waved the rod and have got red, orange, yellow, green and blue, but not violet. **Name** PR Anthony **Address** 37 Hetherington Close, Britwell Estate, Slough, Berks.

HAVE YOU BEEN staring at the screen for days, or given up in disgust, stuck in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. This column is designed to put adventurers in touch with one another. When you're stumped a fellow adventurer may be able to help — and you may be able to solve other people's problems. If you are having difficulties with an adventure, fill in this coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD. We will publish Adventure Contact entries each month in this special column.

Micro ....

Adventure ....

Problem ....

....

....

Name ....

Address ....

....

PBM

PBM magazine covers all aspects of the growing play-by-mail gaming hobby, with regular undates on the computer-moderated commercial games as well as details of the enormous number of "free" non-commercial ones. We also look at the prospects for modem and cable gaming and describe the American experience in this area.

Single issue: 90p. Six-issue subscription: £5.25. Cheques/POs payable to Emjay, 17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU.

THE WAR MACHINE

Published since 1981, TWM is the specialist magazine for micro owners interested in sophisticated simulation games. We carry reviews of computer wargames, adventures and other software, as well as descriptions of games programming techniques for the home programmer.

Single issue: £1.15. Six-issue subscription: £6.50. Cheques/POs payable to Emjay, 17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU.

HAVE an adventurous New Year! The Hobbit £12.95, level 9, Digital Fantasia and Acornsoft Adventures £8.95. Lothlorian, Fantasy Quest, Artic, Virgin, A&F and many more all available at discount. (SAE stating machine.) Prices fully inclusive. Chipmunk Software, 64 Cherryhill Avenue, Dundonald BT16 0JD.

The Foundation International Science Fiction/Fantasy Club. Discounts on books, games, comics, computer software. 45p S.A.E. for details to: D. Hodson, 104 Debden, Gloucester Road, Tottenham, London N17 6LN.

TEXAS TI99/4A software. Wide range available from £3.95. Send s.a.e. for list. Apex Software (MA), Swiss Cottage, Hastings Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex TN38 8EA.

DISPLAY AD INDEX

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£4.20	£4.40	Please continue on a separate sheet of paper	

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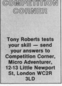
Address..

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Telephone..

Please cut out and send this form to: Classified Department, *Micro Adventurer*, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2R 3LD



Tony Roberts tests your skill — send your answers to Competition Corner, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD



The best 20 answers we receive will win a copy of Alpha Dawn, which is part one of Star Frontiers, a science fiction role-playing board game from TSR.

Solve mystery of missing runic rings

TISCH, the black dragon, is now sporting three rings on her left fore-claws.

Pleased, both with herself and the work you have done, Tisch now has another task in mind. She wants you to start on a collection of ancient runic rings. The task is fairly demanding so a recap of your past efforts might help boost your confidence.

In the past you have had to enter the hex to retrieve the first ring, and escape both with your life and any treasure you were able to carry out with you.

On the way you had to battle menacing spiders, hungry giants, a dragon and soldiers. But escape you did.

Still Tisch's prisoner, you had to find a second ring kept in one of eight rooms, which were shrouded in a hazy blue light. However, your strength would last only for six rooms.

For the third ring you had to fight two strange pogg creatures that were situated at two of the entrances of a maze you had to enter where the ring was hidden.

The Pogg's trails were deadly and the walls of the maze were too high for you to escape.

The runic rings Tisch wants you to find were hidden in a time before memory, placed in guarded and booby-trapped places by the last of her kind.

Tisch has spent the past weeks mind-probing the first of these hiding places. She has mapped out the safest route for you through this maze to the ring.

Each turn you must take is marked with a left or right arrow on the six parchments shown here.

As you enter the maze a deep growl and clanking of metal on a nearby rock startles you. The parchments slip from your fingers.

Hurriedly you gather them together — but what order should they be in?

As a tie-breaker complete the following sentence in 15 words or less. The type of character I like to play best in role-playing games is . . .

Your entry must arrive by the last working day in February. The winners and solution will be published in the May issue. You may enter only once. Entries will not be acknowledged and we cannot enter into correspondence on the result.

Due to Christmas schedules the production of this magazine was brought forward by two weeks.

In order to allow readers enough time to complete the competition we have delayed until next month winners and publishing the names of the solution. □

ENTRANCE

THE 'A' RING

EXIT

1 2 3 4 5 6



My name is Diamond, Dan Diamond,
and this is my story. A story of beautiful mermaids, bored robots and dank, dark dungeons. A story that started one muggy day in New York, and like the Big Apple, it's rotten to the core.





The Dan Diamond Trilogy is three separate adventure games. Each game may be played on its own, but clues may be found in the earlier adventures which may help later on. Each game comes with a lavishly illustrated 20-page case file, and hints (both helpful and misleading) which have been hidden in the illustrations.

Part I. Franklin's Tomb, in which our hero receives a mysterious plea for help which leads him to a hidden tomb and the mystery of the stargate.

Part II. Lost in Space, in which our hero finds himself stranded on a derelict spacecraft, doomed to travel endlessly through space, or find a way out.

Part III. Fishy Business, in which our hero lands on a watery planet, discovers the source of the plea for help and saves the day.

All three programs cost £9.95 each and are available for the DRAGON 32, BBC MODEL B and 48k ORIC-1 microcomputers. (note: Fishy Business for the BBC and ORIC will be available February 1984).

It must be the most consistently enjoyable adventure game I've ever played
- Computer Choice (Program of the Month)

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17 Norfolk Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3AA.

Look out for Dan Diamond's next Adventure Series "Franklin in Wonderland" Available Spring 1984

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μSPEECH

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μ **IT'S AS EASY AS THIS!**

LET S$=ac(sh)un st(aa)(sh)uns will say **"ACTION STATIONS"**

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μ **WHAT CAN'T IT DO!**

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- μ Voice Chess *(Artic)* Mined Out *(Quicksilva)*
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- μ The Birds and the Bees *(Bug Byte)*
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